

O F
G O O D
Intentions.

By J. S.

*G O D is a Spirit, and those who
worship Him, ought to worship
Him in S P I R I T and in
T R U T H, Joh. 4. 24.*

L O N D O N,
Printed in the Year, 1702.



TO THE
TRULY VIRTUOUS
AND
His much Honour'd Friend,
Mrs. M. G.

Madam,

I Am very sensible with what Unwillingness and Reluctancy you will receive a Present which is usher'd in with a *Dedication*. Your Modesty inclines you strongly to affect *Privacy*, which makes you shy of being expos'd to the View and No-

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rice of the Publick ; and your *Humility* is afraid of any thing which leaves a show of paying you more than an *Ordinary Respect*. I beseech you, Madam, did the Devout *Paula* and *Eustochium* think it prejudic'd their Humility, that St. *Hierom*, (tho' perhaps the most Learned of all the Fathers,) address his Writings to them? Or was the Roman Lady, *Electa*, afraid that St. *John* the Evangelist did her too much honour in *Dedicating* to her his *Second Epistle*, which is now part of the Canonical Scripture? I dare say they were not troubled with any such spiced Considerations.
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Their whole Aim was to benefit their *Soul* by the Knowledge of such Truths as might make their Thoughts *Heavenly*, and their Lives *Virtuous*; and therefore were (without detriment to their Humility) Glad of such Presents. What is it then you can fear? The Entitling you to this piece does not engage you to defend the least tittle of it; nor so much as oblige any to *Assent* to it, farther than the *Reasons* it offers do evince. I do not think it is at all Vain in me to profess openly that I am not Ambitious of any Man's Approbation, nor (as they call it)

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Protection; nor even Willing to bespeak any one's *Liking* of what I write. Nay, that I should think I injur'd Truth, did I *court*, or even *accept* the Patronage of a King or Queen for any Production of mine. If the *Reasons*, on which it subsists, do not *support* it, let it, as it deserves, *sink*.

To compound the business after some fashion, I would not *speak out* your Name, but only *hinted* it obscurely : yet, I fear that even this cautiousness will give you but a slender satisfaction. To justify and excuse this Action of mine, I could (did I proceed upon Vulgar

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gar Motives) alledge the Respects I had for your Sincere and Unpretended Goodness, & my Gratitude for the Particular Friendship and Esteem you are pleased to allow me; and that, having no better Return to make, I meant it as an *Acknowledgment* of the one, and a *Requital* for the other: I could also alledge that I was more willingly drawn to it, for the great Respects I had for diverse of your much Honoured Family. But give me leave to assure you, Madam, *these* were neither my *Only*, nor my *Chief* Motives. They will make a wrong Judgment of

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my *Genius*, who think me Guilty of such *puntilio's* of Civility; or that I was led to it by no *Higher* Consideration but such as was meerly *Complementary*. As my Intention in Writing this Treatise was to *do Good*, so I had the same End in *Dedicating* it; and, had I known any who would make *better Use* of it, it should have been *theirs*. Besides, it contain'd diverse Discourses peculiarly *Useful* and *Proper* for your self; and I hop'd that this Appropriating it to *you*, would give you a more Particular Attention in your perusing it; and, thence, enable you to
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penetrate better the Reasons
for those Spiritual Doctrines
it delivers.

None will think, Madam,
that, in Addressing it to you, I
meant to *pass a Complement* up-
on you ; Rather he'll be apt
to imagin I intend to *Libel* your
Goodness ; when he sees me
here *profess* that I did it for this
reason, that I might take hence
an occasion to *tell you publickly*
of your Faults ; I mean some
Errours, into which your self,
and too many other Good
Christians, have unluckily *slipt*
for want of due Information ;
tho' indeed, I must say they
are *Errours on the right hand*, or

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Such as are better than their
Opposit Extrems. Your Appli-
cation to *Piety*, and your Sol-
licitous Concern to *save your*
Soul, made you strain after
Satisfaction in *Two Points* espe-
cially, and you *mistook* in *both*.
The first is, that you earnest-
ly long'd to *Feel* in your self
those *Spiritual Acts* or *Habits*,
which are affections peculiarly
belonging to the *Soul*; and,
particularly to *feel* that you
lov'd *GOD* above all things; and,
because you could not find any
such *Feeling* or *Experience* of
such *Supernatural Dispositions*,
you remain'd much *Dissatisfy'd*,
and fear'd lest you might be
destitute of them. To

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To rectify this Mistake, I have attempted here to manifest to you, out of the very Nature of a *Spiritual Being*, that what you so much long for, and strain after, is *impossible*, and therefore not to be expected. For, there being, in our case, the self same reason and possibility for all the *other Sensations* as for this *one of Feeling*, it follows that, as we can never feel, hear, see, smell, or taste the Substance of our Soul, so neither can we feel, hear, see, &c. any *Act* or *Quality* that peculiarly belongs to it; but they can only be gather'd, or made known to us by the *Reflexion* of

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of our Reason, which is a *Spiritual Act*. This done, I proceed to show you *how* to gather them, or make them *known* to you; and, so, *open the Way*, or let you into the true Knowledge of *Spirituality*; which will give you comfortable Lights how to make (to a fair degree) a right Judgment of your *own Interiour*.

Your Second Mistake is, that, tho' those who know you are satisfied that you make it the Great Employ of your Life to serve *G O D*; and, next to his Service, to do good to your Neighbour; yet, notwithstanding, whether out of *Scr*upulous-

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pulousness you do no better, or out of Zeal of reaching that high pitch at which your Intentions aim'd, you are afraid you do not love GOD heartily, and, consequently, that you do no Good at all. Now, tho' I must profess my Tenet, is that to hold an *Erroneous* Opinion, even concerning our selves, cannot (as far as that regard reaches) be Grateful, or Acceptable to the God of Truth; yet I might perhaps, tho' unwillingly, have let you go on in your beloved *Humble Error*; had I not apprehended that that *Fear* you give way to, has a great Mixture of *Servil* in it; which,
first,

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first, is (so far) Opposit to the Genuin Spirit of *Christianity*; for, this admits only *Reverential* and *Filial* Fear; and forbids all *Servil* Dread of their *Heavenly Father* to those who truly endeavour to serve him, and resolve to keep his Holy Commandments. Next, this *Servil Fear*, it being, in such Persons, to some Degree *Irrational*, must necessarily something damp and diminish their *Hope*; which, I am sure, does, by consequence, cool their *Charity*.

Humble your self, then, Madam, as to what you have of your self, as low as you can imagin; It is your Duty: But
take

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Take heed you do not injure,
debase, and make *Insignificant*
the most *Effectual Means* which
our Good *GOD* has given us to
make all those *Virtuous*, who
sincerely practice them. How
shall any *Weaker* Christians,
who apply those Means but
seldom, apprehend they will e-
ver do them good, if they were
of your opinion, that they have
done *no good at all* to such as
have carefully observ'd and
us'd them *continually*? He who
judges he has not acquir'd any
true Love of *GOD*, tho' he
has *constantly* us'd those Means
which were intended to make
him gain it, *hitherto*; the next
obvious

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obvious Conceit he will take, is, that, let him do what he can, he shall hardly ever acquire any *hereafter*; in which case, if he *continues* in that Errour, what a *comfortless* condition will he be in, and how destitute of *Hope*, and consequently of *Charity*, at the hour of *Death*, when he should most need those *Vir-tues*, only which can *raise* and *wing* his Soul for *Heaven*? To free you from this Errour, and affect your Soul with that *Consolation* and *Interiour Joy* and *Peace*, which are the *Effects* and *Fruits* of the Holy Ghost, is one main Reason why I address this Treatise particularly:
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to your self; in which I have discours'd this Point at large; and, I fear, some hasty and prejudic'd Readers, who *pass* their verdict ere they weigh the Reasons, will think I have gone too far.

But, to let you see that I am equitable in my late Censure, I must declare that you are not *Singular* in making this *Rash Judgment* of your self. No; I have, in the long Course of my Life, met with very many who were guilty even of a *Sinfull* *Scrupulosity*; and great Multitudes also who have given too much way to the same kind of *Irrational Despondency*,
which

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which I am here endeavouring to *cure* in you: I will name but one of this later sort, who came the nearest to your degree of Faultiness in this kind; whose Example, tho' it cannot *excuse others*, yet, I am sure, it will not, in the least, *disparage any*; I mean that Honourable and Virtuous Personage, Mrs. Mary Howard of Norfolk; whom I do the rather pitch upon, and mention, because 'tis a Duty I owe to *Her Memory*, and even to the *World*, that such an Example of Goodness be not bury'd in Oblivion; for, of all things in the *World*, *Patterns*, which are to influence
our

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our imitation, *should not be lost.*
This excellent Lady was so
addicted to all that's *Good*, that
her *whole* Life and Conversati-
on shew'd she valu'd nothing
else: All the time she cou'd
spare from her necessary Fami-
ly-Duties was spent in Prayer,
Reading pious Books, or in
doing all the obliging Kindnes-
ses she was able, to her Neigh-
bour. It was her delight to
hear *Spiritual Discourses*, tending
to *improve* her acute Under-
standing in the Knowledge of
Concerning Truths, or her
Will in Affections for Heav'n.
Tho' her Humor was pleasant
and cheerful, yet the nicest Cri-
tick

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tick cou'd never observe any
Action come from her, that
had the *least Tang* of Levity or
Vanity: Never was any *Pas-*
sionate or *Mis-becoming* Word
heard from her *Well-guarded*
Mouth, nor any *rash Censure* of
others. Even her *Recreations*
were season'd with something
that tended to *Piety*; or rather
it was her Recreation to make
them tend to that good end.
How Edifying was it (I wish
might be also *Exemplar* to o-
thers) to see her, on evenings
by the fire side, teach her little
Children most of the concern-
ing and memorable Historical
Passages in the Old and New
Testa-

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Testament, by the way (as we call 'em) of *Winter-Tales* ; applying them to move their Hearts to the *Fear* and *Love* of **GOD** ; with that *Facility* in delivering them, and that *Dexterity* to make them sink into their tender Capacities, as did at once both *instruct* and *delight* them : Her *Judgment* in reaching the *deepest* Points, and in penetrating the *Reasons* of them, was admirable, and seem'd beyond her Sex ; and she had a strange Felicity in discoursing them clearly to others, without Hesitation, affected Words, or sought Expressions.

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Yet this matchless Lady (of whom I have not given half the due Character) was not free from your Fault of thinking she did *nothing that was Good*; and was *dissatisfy'd* with her *self*, while all her Friends (among which were diverse of the most Knowing and most Virtuous of our Nation) did *admire* her. The over-Timorousness of doing amiss, (which partly Nature, partly Education, had given her) joyned with the *Vivacity* of her *Fancy* and *Wit*, was such, that tho' her *Judgment* was capable of the most *Solid* Principles, which might have *settled* her thoughts
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and rectify'd her; yet they needed *much inculcating*, ere they cou'd fix *steadily* amongst the bustling Croud of so many Nimble and *Stirring Phantasms*:

This oblig'd me to spend many hours with her in occasional Discourses to keep her Hope from lagging: But I must declare I cou'd not have possibly done her any good, but by ordering my Discourses so as to begin with *evident Grounds and Principles*; which reduced her good Judgment to a *Steadiness*, and settled all her *Volatil Doubts*. I taught her therefore the true Nature of a *Spirit*, by which means she
gained

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gain'd a right Notion of *Spirituality*. She complain'd much that she had, in her younger Years, read some Books, and had given too much Credit to some Discourses, that had fill'd her Mind with *Ground'ess Fears*; which had made her apprehend the way to Heav'n was *Frightful* and *Hideous*; and she did ever thankfully acknowledg the *Comfort* I had given her, and the *Advantages* she had reap'd from the way I took with her, both as to the raising her *Hope*, and the increasing of her *Charity*.

I must acknowledge therefore that the *first* thoughts I had
of

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of publishing any thing of this kind, was occasionally given by *Her*; tho' my *Uneven* Circumstances gave me no inviting Opportunity to pen them till now. Wherefore, as you succeed her in her Christian *Virtues*, and well-meaning *Errors*, (for, indeed, your Souls were so perfectly alike that they seem'd *Twins*;) so 'tis but just you should succeed her in her intended *Title* to this Treatise, which otherwise had been *Hers*. Receive it then, Madam, as (in some sort) a Legacy descended to you from one who had so near an *Affinity* with you in Goodness. My best Wishes

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shall still go along with it, that it may benefit your Soul, by erecting your *Hope* and enflaming your *Charity*; which cannot fail of bringing you to that State which you daily and fervently aspire to, *Eternal Happiness*.

Your Truest Friend and

Servant in Christ,

J. S.

T O

The Pious and Judicious
Christian Reader.

I Doubt not but the Way of handling Spiritual Matters which I here take, will seem to many very Unusual, and to others, in part, Needleſs: which obliges me to ſay ſomething for my ſelf, by way of Apology. My moſt Deliberate Reaſon, which claims the Right of Governing my Actions, did abſolutely convince me, that if I would write Solidly, and inſtruct my Readers thorowly, I neither could, nor ought to take any other. Common Senſe inform'd me, and will every Man who conſiders what he ſays, that

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if we would treat of any thing from its Grounds, (to do which my Genius had ever led me) and not meerly Superficially ; we are to begin with the giving our Readers knowledge of the Nature of that Subject about which we are to discourse ; and that to do otherwise, is to talk of we know not what. Whence, my Design being to treat of our Intentions, which are Spiritual Acts, I conceiv'd I was to give my Readers, first, such a competent Knowledge of the Nature of a Spirit, as was sufficient to make such Acts understood ; for without this, none can ever know well what the word [Spiritual] means. Again, our Intention being an Act of our Will, directed to an End by our Understanding ; and, our Will being that Faculty and Power in us, which sets all our other Faculties (whether Interiour, or Exteriour) on work ; and, consequently,
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influences all their Operations, which (our Soul being Rational) do succeed orderly to one another; hence I judg'd I was to shew the Distinct Natures of these Operations, and also the Series or Order in which they thus follow; that, so, those of them which come nearest to Execution, being more easily Perceptible, and indeed Sensible; we may, by Reflecting on those Outward Actions, and then looking back on those which went before, and were the Causes of them, gain the Knowledge of our Intentions; which are, of themselves, more Imperceptible and Retruse. Which done, I go on to shew in what consists the Goodness or Badness of our Intentions; what perverts the Goodness of them, and what weakens it; together with the Means how to obviate the Mischief of the Former, and the Inconveniencies of the Later.

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And, because this Doctrine, tho' it follows the Direct Course of Plain Nature in all our Humane Actions, may, notwithstanding, seem to some too Speculative; therefore, to make it more intelligible, I take care all along to reduce it to Practice, by applying it to diverse Instances, and to our Christian Life; by which, Attentive Readers may in a manner Experience the Truth of it, by seeing the Agreeableness it has to our several Acts of Devotion, and to our Acquisition and Practice of Virtue. Whence, in pursuance of the former Doctrine, I show manifestly how we are to make our Good Intentions; that is, out of what Principles they are to issue, and by which they are to be Directed. From the same Grounds I show the Ill Effects of Scrupulosity, and how to cure that Distemper of the Soul: Which I conceived to be best accomplisht by letting Good Souls.

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Souls see that, if their Intentions be right set for Heaven, and Hearty, they may come to be well assur'd God is well-pleased with them; or (which is the same) that they are, as it is usually phras'd, in the state of Grace. Which point I set my self to prove by many Arguments; and, to solve those Objections of most weight, which I conceiv'd might be brought against it; by which Means I hop't to set it above the shock of any Attacque.

Many, I may say with truth, very many were the Motives, and those (as it seem'd to me) very forcible ones, which oblig'd me to advance this Uncommon Position lately mention'd. First, I saw plainly, and am very confident I can maintain, that it is neither against Faith, nor in the least opposit to any Christian Virtue; but, on the con-

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rary, that it is most Agreeable to the Spirit of Christianity, and most Efficacious to advance Hope and Charity. Which, were there nothing else, is a sufficient Compurgatour to clear it from being Unsound or Unprofitable; and a convincing Argument, that it is both True in it self, and, withal, very Useful for Piety, and Christian Life. Next, it is the greatest Comfort imaginable to good well-meaning sincere Souls, especially if (as most of them are) Timorous; and conduces highly to make them serve GOD joyfully, gladly, and cheerfully. Besides, it takes off the Scandal laid by Atheists, Deists and Libertines upon a Pious Life, that it is perpetually Vexatious and Anxious; which is enough to deter People from embracing it. And, to say truth, the contrary Opinion makes all those good Souls who are Sollicitous for
their

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their Salvation, (if they duly consider their own condition as it represents it,) lead the most Disconsolate Life that can be imagin'd; and this, not with reference to Worldly Contents, but even in order to Heaven. For, it would perswade them that, let them live as piously as they will, nay even to a high pitch of Sanctity, yet they can never be Certain whether they do any thing that pleases GOD; that is, they can never know certainly whether they do well, or ill; or whether they are in the State of Mortal Sin or no; for only Mortal Sin extinguishes Sanctifying Grace, which most certainly makes us in GOD's Favour. Which is the same as to say, they can never know whether they are serving GOD or the Devil; whether they are GOD's Friends or his Enemies; or Heirs, theirs; whether they are Imps of Hell, or Heirs of Heaven; Adopted

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Sons of their Heavenly Father, or Sons of Perdition. Besides, it seem'd Opprobrious to GOD's Infinit Goodness, to breed a Conceit that He is so Ill natur'd, Wayward, and Humoursome, that let Good Souls, (even tho' his truest and faithfulest Servants,) do what they can to serve and obey Him to their weak power; yet they can never know certainly whether, in their whole Lives, they ever pleased him or no; which I am sure, is against the Genuin Conceit of all Christians; if Vulgar Opinions, which have no Ground but that they are grown Common, have not perverted it. And, 'tis such an odd piece of Sense to grant that we are bid keep GOD's Commandments, and are told that we do most assuredly please GOD, (or, are in the State of Grace) when we do so; and yet to deny that any Man knows actually whether he does (or ever did) keep his Command-

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mandments or no, and by doing so please him: This, I say, is a Doctrine so perfectly Incoherent, that I cannot perswade my self that any Sensible and Rational Man, who considers what he says, can seriously say it, possibly hold it, or not hold the Contrary.

These, and many other Reasons mentioned hereafter, especially in the 11th Discourse, and not the Vain and Foolish Desire of broaching any new Opinion, were the true Motives which forced me to propose this Pious and Comfortable Doctrine. If any Learned Men dislike it, I hope they will be so Charitable as to rectify my Errour: which can only be done by alledging some Authority in which we cannot be deceived, nor it deceive us: or else some Reason, that clearly evinces the contrary; and, withal, by replying to the
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Reasons produced here to justify it. Otherwise, to find fault with the Tenet it self without overthrowing the Grounds that support it, is no better than to deny the Conclusion, without invalidating the Premises; which every one knows is amongst Scholars, held most Ridiculous; and signifies just as much as if a Man should say, I'll oppose it because it disgusts my Fancy, tho' my Reason knows not why.

*Some may perhaps think it is not Prudent to let Good People know they are so, lest it should hazard to make them Spiritually Proud. Now, I cannot think that 'tis GOD's Will we should tell them a Lye, or make them believe they are worse than they are, to keep them Humble. I am sure we shall hinder them for paying their due Gratitude to GOD for the Supernatural Gifts & Graces
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he has given them: for none can render thanks, unless very hollow-heartedly, for what he thinks he never received, or, at least, knows not whether he has receiv'd it or no. Let them but see evidently they neither have (nor are) any thing of themselves; that GOD of his meer Mercy bestow'd on them those Gifts without any Desert of theirs; that without his Grace they had certainly been damn'd eternally; that He preserves those Gifts to them every Moment, otherwise they would presently lose them; that the greater the Gifts are, the stricter account he will take how well they have employ'd them; & lastly, that the least Act of Spiritual Pride will bereave them of them all: Let these true Maxims of Christianity, be well inculcated, and there will be no need of any Pious Fraud (all Fraud being, indeed, Impious) to keep them Humble.

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ble. *Let us make them as careful of Persevering as we can possibly; Let us exhort them to work out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling; particularly, let us admonish them in St. Paul's words, He that stands let him take heed he does not fall: But then, let us reflect that these words presuppose that the Man thus admonish'd, knows he stands. 'Tis wise and sound Counsel to a Man who knows he stands high on a precipice, to bid him beware of falling; but, if that Man knows not whether he stands at all, or lies flat on the Ground already, 'tis in my mind, but an odd kind of Advice to warn such a Man to take heed lest he fall.*

*One thing I must particularly desire the Reader to bear in mind all the while he peruses these following Discourses: which is, that I speak
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all along to those well-meaning Christians who do heartily endeavour to save their Souls, keep GOD's Commandments, and constantly make use of the Means left for that End by our Saviour to his Church. They are call'd in Scripture, Recti corde, Right in heart; and by the Angels in their Hymn at our Saviour's Nativity, Homines bonæ voluntatis, Men of a Good Will. To such as these, those Celestial Choristers foretold and wish't Peace, that is, Interior, or Spiritual Quiet of Mind, and those Consolations which a Good Conscience, or Good Intentions bring along with them: And, 'tis to give such good Souls this Interior Peace, that they may serve GOD with Comfort, and free from the Disturbance of Anxiety, Fears, and Scruples, that I level my Endeavours. Unless this be rightly understood and kept in memory, the
Reader

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Reader will be apt to mistake the greatest part of this ensuing Treatise. I say once more, 'tis to These, & only These, the main part of it is address'd; & not to highly elevated Contemplatives, or to Sordid Sinners.

The reason why I restrain'd my Discourse to them, was, because I had observ'd that many Spiritual Books (tho' otherwise very Excellent) while they were address'd to all sorts of Christians in Common, of whatever size of Spirit they were, did oft-times breed Confusion, and in great part fail'd of the Good End intended: while Sinners, and Loose Livers were apt to catch hold of those Comfortable passages, which were only Proper for Good Souls; and, applying them to themselves, took thence occasion to presume upon GOD's Goodness and Fatherly Mercy; to which being, while such, only Objects of his Wrath and severe Justice) they

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they had no kind of Title, unless they became Penitent; and Flattering themselves with that ill-grounded Hope, and Foolish Confidence, they, hence, run on in Sin: And, on the other side, well-meaning and weak Souls, while they read such passages which were Frightful, and intended to shake and terrify the Souls of Wicked Livers, misapply'd them to themselves; and took them, as if they had been spoken to them; and thence fell into a thousand Scruples; in so much, that the Genuin and honest-hearted Love of G O D, and the Satisfaction, which the best Testimony of a good Conscience gave them, that G O D reciprocally lov'd them; did, by this means, degenerate into a Servil or Slavish Fear, and fill'd them full of Terrifying thoughts and Dreadful Scruples upon every little Occasion. These Promiscuous Advices, I say, did
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sometimes needlessly cut and lance weak Souls, to their great Pain and Grief, when the Wound of Sin was only Cutaneous and Superficial, and curable by applying a little Lenitive Balsom: And, at other times, easie Remedies were misapply'd to heal, (or rather palliate the cure of) those deep Wounds of Sin, by covering them with a gentle Plaister; when as they need'd Incision to the Quick, and could only be healed by a Painful Compunction and a heart-tearing Sorrow. To avoid these Inconveniences, I thought fit to particularize the Subject I writ to, and to pitch upon Good well-meaning Souls who make a Conscience of all their ways; and I speak to them in such Language as is proper for the Adopted Children of G O D, as indeed they are. I endeavour to make them lively apprehend they are truly such; and (having secur'd their Humility, and arm'd

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arm'd them strongly against Spiritual Pride) I give them what Comfort I can by assuring them that they love GOD, (tho' their Fear, and Inability to reflect, hinders them from discerning it;) and consequently, that GOD loves Them; by which means they will, I doubt not, serve GOD more cheerfully, Trust in him more heartily and firmly; and Love him more affectionately.

And now Reader thou hast the whole Sum of my Intentions in this Treatise; and how I aim, in the Conduct of Souls, to set Love above Fear. These two Passions are incompatible; and as (1st Ep. of John, C. 4: v. 18.) Perfect Charity (or Love) casts out Fear; so Fear, if Excessive, Anxious and Scrupulous, must necessarily, to a great degree, extinguish Love, or Charity. To secure some part of my Doctrine from Opposition, I am forced in my 12th
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Discourse, to make some kind of Excursion to satisfy the Learned; which those who are not such, may pass over if they please. I repeat and inculcate over and over some of my Reasons, as occasion offers: which I did on set purpose, because Reflex Thoughts, by which only this Subject (and, indeed, any matter that is Spiritual can be manag'd, do not stick so easily in the Memory, as those which come in directly by the Senses. Lastly, I subjoyn some Particular Holy Intentions to raise Good Souls to farther Degrees of Perfection, and some Particular Instructions how, in some Signal passages belonging to Prayer, they may exert their Spirit, and advance their Devotion: For, these which I have there singled out, being of the greatest weight, ought not of all others, be skipp'd over hastily and carelessly. If, having lately refin'd my
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Dull Thoughts by Metaphysical Contemplations of the Nature of a Soul, of Angels, and the Adorable Deity, I have been so Happy as to give some farther Lights into true Spirituality, and to instruct Devout Souls how to serve GOD better in Spirit and in Truth, as was my Design; I beg of the Christian Reader, that he would joyn with me in Blessing the Divine Wisdom which has illuminated my Darkness; as I shall, in requital, pray he may make the Best use of what I write. And lastly, I request him to bestow his best Wishes on the Unworthy Instrument of whatever is Good in these Discourses, that he may practice himself what he recommends to others.

*Thy Affectionate Brother,
and Servant in Christ,*

J. S.

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OF
Good Intentions.

DISCOURSE I.

*That a Competent Knowledge of the
Nature of a Spirit, is a Necessary
Means to promote us towards Per-
fection in our Spiritual Life.*

Sect.
I. **M**AN's Soul being of
a Spiritual nature,
and all that we know
of *Spirits* (except
their *Being*) consist-
ing in this, that they have *Understand-*
ing and *Will*, the chief acts of which
Powers, are to *Know*, and to *Love*; it
follows, that all the Discourses which
can be made concerning *Spiritual* mat-
ters,

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ters, or *Spiritual Life*, must be comprized under those two Operations; and therefore must be reducible to *them*, and respect either one of them or the other. Wherefore, if, while we are discoursing of *Spiritual* things, and of those Operations which are proper to *them* (of which our *Intention* is one) we hap to mingle them in our Thoughts with such Considerations as belong to things which are of *another*, nay of a *contrary* Nature, we must necessarily *confound* our own Judgments, and those of our Readers too; and thence both *fall* our selves, and draw others after us, into most enormous Errours: For, since all Natures that *are* (or indeed that *can be*) are either *Corporeal* or *Spiritual*; and, consequently, every thing that we can propose to our Thoughts, or even to our Imagination, must either be a *Body* or a *Spirit*, which are of a *contrary*, or rather *contradictory* Nature; 'tis impossible that any Errour (unless it be the mistaking *Being* for *Not-Being*, or *Something* for *Nothing*) should be so vastly wide and extravagant, as is the mistaking of what's *Cor-*
pore-

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porcal for *Spiritual*, or what's *Spiritual* for *Corporeal*: No wonder then if so Fundamental an Errour does occasion most of the Miscarriages, and breed most of those Discouragements and Difficulties, which do so continually perplex *well-meaning* Souls; and sometimes also, even those who are to conduct them; as will be seen in the sequel of this Treatise.

2. On the other side, it follows with the same evidence, That no *Great Error* can easily happen in our *Spiritual Conduct*, unless we fall into this strange deviation now lately mentioned: For, since all true *Knowledge* is built on our conceiving rightly the *Nature of the Thing* about which we are Discoursing; and, consequently, all *Security* from Errour on our *holding steadily* to that Nature thus conceived; we can not, while we do so, fall into any main, or very considerable Errour. We may, indeed, be now and then mistaken in our *Inferences* and *Deductions*; but even These too may, without much difficulty, be Discovered and Corrected by one who attends to the Grounds now lay'd. For,

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if those Deductions be *erroneous*, they must needs *falsifie* the Nature of the Thing which is in Discourse, or (which is the same) lie cross to the Grain of it, or make that Thing *to be what it is not*; which (it being a perfect Contradiction) must needs be easily perceptible to an ordinary Understanding; nor can any Man of common Capacity, be so Dull, but he may quickly be made aware of so gross a Mistake.

3. Wherefore, seeing we are here discoursing of Good Intentions, which are *Spiritual Acts*, nothing can be more fundamentally necessary for the Direction of *well-meaning* Souls, who are *capable* of such Knowledges, than to instruct them (as far as their pitch allows) in the Nature of a Spirit. For, how should any Man be made sensible of his Proficiency, or Deficiency in *Spirituality*, if he be *wholly ignorant* what a Spirit is; that is, if he does not, to some degree, know what the word [*Spiritual*] means? without which, he can never be satisfied, whether, in many particular actions, he goes *right* or *wrong*; or, whether he *advances*, or goes *backwards*

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wards in *Spirituality*. Since then, *This* is the Chief End of my present Undertaking, I conceive my self to be indispensibly oblig'd in the first place, to furnish my Readers with a Competent and Distinct Knowledge of a *Spiritual Nature*; that, so, they may be able to discern what Actions of theirs are *truly Spiritual*, and proceed peculiarly from the *Soul*; and what do properly proceed from that *Corporeal* Faculty, call'd the *Fancy*, or *Imagination*; and how far they partake of the one, or the other. For, otherwise, our *Soul* being forced, while in the *Body*, to make use of those *Material* or *Corporeal* Resemblances, call'd *Phantasms* (which Brutes have as well as we;) our *Fancy* will still be suggesting to us, and striving to put upon us those *Superficial Resemblances* of hers, which reach not the *Nature* of any thing whatever; and, perhaps, if those *Fancies* be *very lively*, they will inveigle us to believe they are *Spiritual*; if we be not made well aware of its *Deceptive Genius*, and how the *Spiritual Acts* of our *Soul*, are of a *quite different*, and *much superior* *Nature* to the *Imagery*

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painted by our Imagination; which is no more the Thing it self, than a Picture is a Man.

4. Let not humble Souls be deterr'd by conceiting this knowledge is by them Unattainable, or apprehend 'tis a speculation beyond their short reach. Let them rather stir up their Christian Virtue of *Hope*, and rest assur'd that God's good Providence is never wanting to us in Necessary Knowledges, as this is. Plain uncultivated *Nature*, if we use it to our power, will teach us this easie Lesson; and heedful *Attention*, and *Reflexion*, will farther instruct us, and confirm us in that with which so kind and skilful a Mistress has imbu'd us. Besides, *Use* (as we experience) does *perfect* our natural Faculties: And the Use of *Thinking*, and thus *Reflecting* on those plain Rudiments which Nature has instill'd into us, will ripen those raw Knowledges to that degree of Perfection, which is requisite for every ones Pitch; so that (if we be not wanting in our Care and Industry) we shall hence be enabled to keep our Judgments *Firm* and *Unerring* amidst
all

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all the *restless* Motions of our *never-uniform*, and *never satisfied* Fancy.

5. To know *perfectly* the Nature of a *Spirit*, as it is in it self, is unattainable by us in this mortal state : Yet, to let the Reader see that Natural Reason may give the *meanest* Reflector such a knowledge of it, as perfectly distinguishes it from *Bodily* Substances, (which is all that is requisit for our present purpose) we need no other Arguments but this plainest Discourse. Let us take any Subject which is acknowledg'd to be of a *Spiritual* Nature, or any Qualification properly belonging to a *Spirit*, v. g. *Truth*, *Knowledge*, *Virtue*, or such like: For example, let us pitch upon the Virtue of *Justice* : which done, let us suppose one should ask, How *Big*, or how *Little* this Virtue, call'd *Justice*, is? That is, how *Long*, *Broad*, or *Thick* it is; whether it be as *Big* as a *Mountain*, or as *Little* as a *Grain of Sand*? As *Long* as a *Mile*, or as *Short* as an *Inch* ; as *Broad* as a *Corn-field*, or as *Narrow* as a *Yard-wand*, &c. Would not all Mankind look upon him as a Madman, who should seriously ask

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such absurd Questions? And yet we should not have such an Opinion of him, did he ask how *Big, Little, Long, Broad, or Thick* any Body is: Which shews, that Natural Reason tells us, that all *Bodies* have some degree of *Bigness*, or *Quantity* in them, but that *Spirits* have none. Suppose, next, he should ask us of what *Figure* this Virtue of Justice is: as, whether it be *Round, Square, or Triangular*? Or, of what Colour it is; whether it be *Red, Green, Blew, or Yellow, &c.* Could any Man of Sense, think such an Asker were well in his Wits? Again, should he ask us whether that Virtue be *Hot, Cold, Moist, or Dry*; whether it be *Smooth, Rough, Hard, Soft*, or endowed with any *Physical Quality*? Who could refrain from smiling at such nonsensical Interrogatories? And yet we should think none Guilty of such an extravagant Folly, for asking such Questions concerning all, or most *Bodies*. And what does this tell us, but that 'tis granted by the Free and Ready acknowledgment of Unprejudiced *Nature*, that is, by *common Sense*, that 'tis *self-evident*,

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evident, that *Spiritual* things have nothing at all to do with Quantity, Figure, Colour, nor with any of those *Physical Qualities* that affect *Bodies*; but that they are of a *Distinct* and most *Opposit* Nature to all that is found in this *Material*, or *Corporeal World*; and, that *Bodies* and *Spirits* agree in nothing but in this, that each of them are *Things*; or are capable of *Being*, and disagree in every thing else. I say again, this is *self-evident* to our *Natural Reason*; nor can it ever strain any Man's Capacity to understand it, who has but wit enough to know the meaning of the words we use; for that which is held by all the Sons of Nature to be *against common Sense*, is *self-evidently False*, and that which accords with it, is, for the same Reason, *self-evidently True*. Note, that our *Intention* being a *Spiritual Act*, this Discourse holds equally in it, as it does in the *Virtue of Justice*, which is a *Spiritual Quality*; whence follows, that we are not to judge of our *Intentions* by *Corporeal Resemblances*, or *Phantasms*, which strike directly upon our Understand-

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ing by Impressions on our Senses ; but, by our *Thoughts* and *Discourses*, which can only be known by *Reflexion*.

6. This way of Instruction may seem to some devout humble Souls *impertinent*, at least *unnecessary*, to our present Business, and little better than an *useless* piece of *Curiosity*: They will alledg that 'tis best for those of *their* mean Talent of Wit, to be led by their Directors, without troubling themselves, or wearying their Brains, with such high Conceptions: But I must tell them, that *Knowledg* is one of the *Noblest* Gifts God's Goodness ever bestow'd upon Mankind; and that if such a Knowledg be *useful* for their Souls Good, (as, omitting at present many other Reasons, appears by this, that 'tis given them by *Nature*, and not by any vain or curious Enquiry of their own) in that case 'tis a *Duty* not to stifle and extinguish it by an Unactive Despondency; or to hide that Talent, lent them to traffick with, in a Napkin; but to *improve* it, and make use of it for the benefit of their Souls: That, tho' it savours of Vanity to aim at *Impertinent*

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pertinent Knowledges, which are *beyond* their reach, and over strain their Capacity; yet 'tis very faulty to affect Ignorance, when Knowledg is voluntarily and frankly offer'd them by *Nature*. In this case 'tis little better than a kind of *Disacceptance* of an Excellent Endowment given them by a Divine Benefactor, and an undervaluing his Gifts; nay more, it seems to imply a *Misconceit* of God's *Wisdom* in bestowing them on such as they are, *to no purpose*, which is the same as if he threw them away carelessly and unadvisedly: But, because 'tis grown to so common a Conceit, and confirm'd by Usage or Custom, for People to affect to lull themselves in *Ignorance* under the colour of *Humility*, and a *willing* (I shou'd rather say *stupid*) *Acquiescence* to what is barely *told*, and not *show'd* them; and that I fear this will give to many a prejudice against laying any Rational Discourse for a *Ground* of *Spirituality*; therefore, it being of so high importance, to make head against his *mistaken Humility*, and to show the *Usefulness* of the Method I here design, I shall
be

be something larger in laying open the *Benefit* of this Way, and Particularly of that *Nature-raught* Discourse, premis'd in the 5th. Sect.

7. And, first, were there nothing else to recommend that, and such like plain Discourses, the *Usefulness* of it appears even hence, that 'tis very effectual to establish the Faithful against the plausible suggestions of those *Mock-Wits*, the *Atheists*, who confound Corporeal and Spiritual Natures, by making them to be one and the same, and thence deny there is any thing but *mere Bodies*; which, at next remove, brings in the Denial of *all Religion*: I will venture to say farther, that *It alone* is to that Degree sufficient to confute *Atheism*, that any Christian, even of an ordinary Capacity, will become hence enabled to *nonplus* their acutest and most boasted *Rabbies*, by appealing to the Verdict of *their own* most Natural Thoughts, and to the *Common Sense* and *Language* of all Mankind; to which the Atheist dares not for his credit's sake give the Lye.

8. Next, this Discourse, (and the same

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same may be said of others like it) is no *Speculation*, acquir'd by *Learned Disquisition*, or *Industrious Study*. 'Tis, in a manner, engrafted in us by *Common Reason*, which is our Nature. It needs no *Proof* to assure us of it: 'Tis too *Evident* of *it self* to be beholden to *Arguments* to gain our *Acceptation* of it, or *Assent* to it; as appears by this, that we are no sooner *minded* of it, but we are *forced* to see it is *True*. Whence follows, that we *knew* it *before*, tho' we did not *know* we *knew* it, 'till our *Dormant Thoughts* were *awaken'd*, and put upon *Reflecting*.

9. *Thirdly*, I am far from blaming those *Humble Souls*, who do entirely submit themselves to their *Spiritual Director* in *Doubtful Cases*, and such as themselves are *Incapable* to know *without them*; nay, even in such things as seem *Evident*, 'tis generally a great *Rashness* to stray from their *Conduct*, (if they prudently judge them sufficiently qualified) and to follow their *own Sentiment*. But, alas! those *Directors* cannot be continually *at hand*, to answer those many *Doubts*, and re-
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move those Difficulties which occur at *every turn*, while they are carefully travelling in the narrow Path of Virtue, and solicitously pursuing their Happy End. How often are they puzzled to know whether some foolish thoughts are *faulty* or no; whether such a Conversation brings any Detriment to their Soul; whether they have *consented* or no to passionate Suggestions, which to some Degree, weaken their *good Intentions*; whether a Temptation only possessed their *Fancy*, or gain'd upon the Superiour part of their Soul, which is purely *Spiritual*, &c. 'Tis so far from violating the *due Obedience* and deference to their Director, that I dare affirm that, (besides the Comfort this Way brings to themselves) it would, moreover, in these, and such like occasions, be a *great Ease* to their Guide, and free him from the *Fatigue* of answering multitudes of Impertinent scruples; while, by instructing such Souls in some Necessary Truths, which are (as it were) *Grounds* to their Spiritual Life, he renders them able, in such *Common* and Obvious things, to govern

vern themselves. Besides, there is a great Difference between the leading People *blindfold*, (a thing not heard of in Ancient Christianity) and the leading them so that they may, notwithstanding, to some degree, use *their own Eyes*, and in some sort, *see their Way* every step they make. This, I cannot but judge, would give an unspeakable *Comfort* to the Persons to be Directed, and a more *cheerful* satisfaction to their wavering Judgments; and, withal, breed a great *Confidence* in their Guide, for his governing them so *sweetly*, by informing their *Reason*; and not merely by the Rigid Way of *Dry*, and *Dark Authority*.

10. We do, indeed, owe it to the Veracity of God, who is *Truth itself*, totally to submit whatever our Reason can suggest, or object against any Point of *Faith*, when once we have sufficient and firm Motives to believe He has reveal'd it; but, it is not possible to be thus secure of the Word of any particular *Creature*; nor, consequently, can we have any obligation, (especially in things that lie level to

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to our own Reason) to captivate our Understandings so *entirely* to his *bare saying*, unless our Reason goes along with it, and gives us some comfortable Light, that what he tells us is *True*. The common Course of the World, and the general Knowledge we have of Mankind, tell us, that even *good* Men may sometimes be *too Inaugent*, Good-natur'd and Friendly; sometimes *too Morose* and Unreasonable; sometimes, *Unskilful*; and, perhaps, sometimes have a latent Design of their own, or some *By-end* (tho' apprehended by themselves to be good) which may *byass* them. They cannot but know by the Doctrine of Christian Faith that all Mankind is tainted with *Original Sin*, but they must know withal, that their Directors, tho' substantially *good* and *holy* Men, may be liable to some of these Imperfections. Now, all these apprehensions will vanish, if the Director does *instruct* the Persons who apply to him, so as to give some satisfaction to their *Reason*, that his Advice is *Solid* and *True*, and therefore, that himself is *sincere* and *know-*
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ing. Again, if this way be not taken, what can the Person do who consults others for his satisfaction, or which way can he turn him, if it happens, as it may sometimes, that his *Guides* themselves, (tho' as far as he can discern) *equally* learned and pious, do *differ* in their *Sentiments*? What possible way is, in that case, left to free him from his perplex'd condition, if *Reason* is to be *discarded*, and only the *Humane Authority* of particular Men, is blindly to be submitted to, which he sees contradicts it self? Whence, I think I may affirm that most of the *Scruples* which so haunt the *Fancies* of *Inquisitive Persons*, do arise from this, that they find no ground *within themselves*, that gives them that *Satisfaction* and *Security* which is *requisite*, and *owing*, to a *Rational Soul*; but that meer *words* are talkt to them, the *Sense* of which (at least, the *Reason* for them) they do not at all understand; and yet, on the other side, if they consult others, they know not to which of them they should give most *Credit*; finding all of them very *desi-*

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desirous to gain their *Wills* to follow their Sentiment, but none of them endeavouring to satisfy first their *Understandings*, (which they cannot but see they want) but to lead them *blindly* in many things very *useful* for them to know, and of knowing which they are *capable*; which is both very comfortable, and does withal pervert the Way of Nature, which tells them that the *Will* is to be *led* by the *Understanding*, in such matters as the Understanding is capable to judge of. Now, I cannot think that God's Providence has, in such a case, left *no Way* at all to relieve good Souls which are Sollicitous of improving themselves in Virtue and Spirituality; nor can I imagin any *other Way*, but this *Instructive* Way here prescribed.

11. Some may apprehend that this Doctrine tends to make the Penitent Judge of his *Confessarius*; which must certainly draw after it vast Inconveniences. But I utterly deny the Charge, and affirm that it will make him *more heartily* submit to his Guidance, by finding that his Advice is agreeable to
the

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the true Nature which God has given him, and abetted by Principles of Plain Reason: whence also, he will become more indispensably obliged to square his Life according to the Ten Divine Commandments, which are all of them consonant to the Law of *Natural Reason*; in case the Director (as is his Duty) instructs him well, that those Precepts are not meerly *Arbitrary*, but perfectly *Conformable* to what Right Reason dictates, and absolutely Necessary to the *well-being*, if not to the very *Being* and Subsistence of the World. But the main point is, that I am not in the least speaking here of the *Tribunal of Conscience*; nor considering what the Penitent may, or may not do, as to what is *there* enjoyn'd; it being certainly a *precise Duty* to observe such *Injunctions*. The Sacredness of the Place, and Dignity of the Person who does there represent our Saviour, and acts by his Commission, fore-closing the Penitent from assuming to himself the Liberty of prevaricating from what he shall *there* decree. I am only speaking of the *Private* instructions

ons given to those who apply to Spiritual Directors, how they ought to govern, and judge of their own Interior, in order to perfect their Souls in Virtue, v.g. how to avoid, or resist Temptations; how to discern whether their Scruples have any just Ground or no; how to practice Christian Vigilance; how to avoid Distractions, and to pray with fruit and benefit to their Soul, or such like: in all which, Devout People stand in need frequently of *sound Instruction*, and the *Comfort of Satisfaction*; I mean it, in the manner as the Holy St. Teresa consulted the B. St. Peter of Alcantara, concerning her Difficulties in High Prayer; or, as innumerable Persons of all sorts did ask advice of that Wonderful and Faithful Servant of God, and most profound Master of Spirituality, Gregory Lopez. In such cases, I say, I should think it my Duty, to give those that consulted me, all the *Comfortable Light* I am able, by the Way of *Grounds*, and clear *Reasons*, as far as they were capable to receive them, and to make them understand things *from the bottom*.

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Bottom : Nor would I expect they should be guided *blindly* by my Authoritative *Ipse dixit*, or *self-sayings*. I would, in such Circumstances, strive with all my might, to *improve* and *cultivate* in them, those *Seeds* of Natural Knowledge which our Heavenly Father and Creator had *planted* and *radicated* there ; that so I may render those Affections, that spring from their Reason enlightened by Faith, more *Effectual*, by their being Agreeable to the grain of *true Nature* ; to some Degree in the same manner as *St. Paul* did, who gave *Milk* to his little *weak* ones, but spoke *Wisdom* to those *perfect* Souls who were disposed, and capable to bear it, and to edifie by it.

12. I must confess there are some cases in which this kind of Instruction is not so proper. As, first, when the Person to be instructed, is perfectly *rude*, or in a manner *invincibly Ignorant* ; as are most of those who can neither write nor read ; and both want those improvements which are acquir'd by perusing Books, as also those which are attain'd by conversing with the
more

more sensible and well-bred sort of Mankind; and withal, are sometimes so naturally *Dull*, that they can scarce be brought to reflect at all. And yet, even amongst the most Uncultivated Vulgar, very many may be found, who are endowed with good Mother-wits, and are of *acute* Apprehensions, tho' they can express their thoughts but very *bluntly* and *rustically*. So that no Rule can be given for *particulars*, but the prudent Judgment we make of their respective Abilities; only we are to observe in *general*, that every one is to be instructed according to his *Capacity*, or to his *Exigence*, and *Necessity*. But we need not much trouble our selves about this Disquisition; God's Providence having *measur'd* out to us our Duty in this matter. For, those who are thus excessively *Dull*, do neither mind the *Improving* themselves in Christian Life, nor have the Wit to raise *Difficulties* or Scruples, for which Reasons, this way of Instruction is recommended; so that such Persons do not come within the compass of our present Discourse. In such People as these,

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these, an *Absolute Credulity* to their Pastors is to be cherisht; there being *no other Way needful or proper* to govern them. But those Christians who dwell in the *middle Story*, and are of a more *polisht* Education, having more *stirring* thoughts, will, if they be withal truly *Pious*, strain towards Perfection, and solicitously exert their steps to reach at Heaven; hence they will be apt to raise many *duties* which is the best way for them to take, and to *fear* they do not observe it as they ought. This makes them subject to *Scruples*; which (if irrational) do weaken that excellent Virtue of Divine Hope; which, to some Degree, diminishes the fervour of their Charity. Wherefore, in such Persons as these, there is clearly a Necessity of *satisfying* their Reason, and advancing them towards Perfection, by giving them some *Rules* by which they may walk, and make a Competent Judgment of their own Interiour. Certainly, when God has bestowed a fair Degree of Understanding on a Soul, and rendered it *Improvable* in Spiritual matters, it is in many regards

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Expedient for her, and lays an obligation on her *Director*, to improve her. Nor can I conceive, that, when our Blessed Saviour (*Mat. 5. 48*) commanded (or at least counselled) us to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is also perfect: He intended by those words, to exclude Knowledge, which is the proper perfection of our Understanding. For this being our *Spiritual Eye*, is as necessary to guide our *Soul*, as far as it is capable of Information, as our *Corporeal Eye* is to guide our *Body*; but I would rather think, that on the contrary, he incited and exhorted us to perfect the power more particularly; especially in such knowledges as tend to direct and carry us more steadily toward *Heaven*.

13. Another case in which *Rational Information* may be omitted, is, when the Person to be instructed, is of a vain and proud humour, and does not aim to better his Interiour by it, but only to make a show of knowledge more than others. Such Persons are to be kept up strictly to the meer Dictates that *Faith* has given them, and

the Discipline of the Church; and in all other particulars, to be *held* to the Sentiments of their *Advisers*, and govern'd by their *Authority*, as Men whom they ought to think wiser than themselves: For Knowledge is *lost* upon such self-conceited Men. The Practice of *Humility* will do them far more good than striving to improve them in Spirituality by informing their *Reason*; or rather, if they do not first lay that Virtue for their *Foundation*, they are utterly incapable of any such Improvement at all; for unless they set their *first* step *right*, 'tis impossible they should ever go *forwards* as they ought. If their *Keel* wants that *Ballast*, their bearing a *High Sail* of Knowledge, must necessarily *overset* and *sink* them.

14. The last case, is when the Person to be instructed is so absurdly *scrupulous*, that he has no free Use of his Reason left him. 'Tis clearly in vain to strive to *instruct* such Souls, or offer them *Reasons*, when every Reason that is brought to *inform* them, works no other effect but to create in them *new Scruples*. They stick fast so wil-

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fully in the Mire, in which their ungo-
 vernable *Fear* (and perhaps their *Pride*)
 has plunged them, that they are inca-
 pable of advancing so much as one
 step in Virtue; nor is there any way
 possible to *conduct* those who have put
 out their own *Eyes*, but to lead them
blindfold. If they refuse to be thus led
 by their Director, they are fit for no
 place but *Bedlam*; whither in likeli-
 hood their Frenzy will in time bring
 them. They are the worst sort of *Opi-*
niaters; they are *ever* *doubting*, and
 yet none are more *Stiff* and *Resolute*;
 they are still *asking* advice, and will ne-
 ver take it. Their whole Malady, is
 a dreadful fear of Sin, and yet they still
 commit it by their self conceited Di-
 strust of God's *Mercy*. Good Christi-
 ans ought to pray for them, that they
 fall not into *despair*; a just Judgment
 for their Blaspheming Infinite Goodness;
 a fault of which *Excessive Scrupulous-*
ness is never free; or, rather, if it be
extravagant, it wholly *consists* in it; or,
 at least, is too near a kin to it, and too
 easily reduced to it.

15. In these cases then, *Instruction* by the way of *solid Reason*, is *Impracticable*; but how *Profitable* and *Comfortable* it is for *humble* and *capable* Souls (as the generality of those Christians we speak of, are) especially, if their Zeal of *perfecting* themselves in *Virtue*, have rendered them *desirous* of satisfaction, and that they are, withal, very *Docible*, will be seen by many passages in this ensuing *Treatise*.

DISCOURSE II.

Of diverse Spiritual Acts of the Soul, their Distinction and Order; and of the Nature of that Act call'd Intention.

1. **W**E have already shewn, and laid it for a *Ground* to our future Discourses, that the Soul, and consequently those Acts or Operations which do properly belong to *Her*, they

being *Spiritual*, are of a quite *Different* (nay, *Contrary*) nature from those which are peculiar to *Bodies*. In the next place, we proceed to give the Reader a *Distinct* Knowledge of those several *Acts* themselves; at least, of as many of them as are requisit for our present purpose; which is best done by shewing the *Difference* between them, & how they *respect* one another; that is, how the *Subsequent* ones do *depend* on those that *went before* them. In order to which we premise, first, that the *Acts* of the *Understanding* must necessarily *antecede* those of the *Will*; since no Man can possibly *love* or *hate* that which he never *saw* nor *heard* of, nor had any kind of knowledge of it before.

2. The first *Act* therefore of the *Soul*, in order to *Morality*, must be the knowledge that the thing, which is to affect our *Will*, *is*; or that there *is* a thing of *such a Nature*: Otherwise, it can be nothing at all to *her* in any manner, altho' the *Thing* or *Object* were never so excellent *in it self*.

3. The Second *Act* of the *Soul*, is, the

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the knowledge that the Thing which we considered, formerly, only as an Object of our *Knowing Power*, is *Agreeable* to our *Nature*; or, some way or other, a *Good to Us*, or *Our Good*. And this is apt to breed in us, either a *Liking* of it only, if it be but a *slight Good*; or, if a *Great one*, yet it is but *slightly* and *dully apprehended*; or else a *Love* of it, if it be some *Great Good*; or, if a *Trifling one*, *lively apprehended* to be a *Great one*. Which *Love* is apt to stir up the Soul to seek to attain it, if other requisites be not wanting.

4. But to excite the Soul to move towards it, or endeavour to attain it, it must moreover, be represented to us, & held by us to be *Attainable*, or *possible* to be got and enjoy'd; which grounds that Disposition in us called *Hope*. For, otherwise, let the thing be never so *Excellent in it self*, yet, if we judge it absolutely *Impossible to be acquir'd*, we can never be so *neerly concern'd* for it, as heartily to affect it, or judge it *Our Good*: For, what is it to *Us*, if we can never get it; or be the better by it. All we could do, in that case, would

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be to view it *speculatively*, or (as it were) *stare* at it with the Eye of our Understanding, as a *Fine thing*, or some extraordinary *Curiosity*; or, perhaps, to *talk* of it vainly to others, as a thing which others were ignorant of, and we had observ'd and found out by our Wit and Speculation; and in *these* would be terminated all the Concern we should have for it. We took, indeed, the Object *into us* by making true Conceptions of it; but we never went *out of our selves* towards it; nor could our Will *move forwards*, or make the least step to *attain* it, because we judg'd it *Impossible*, at least we saw no Possibility how to compass it, *Despair* surceases and stupifies all farther Acting, nor can any Man heartily *wish* or *pursue* that which he judges Unattainable; no more than any Man can desire *seriously*, or set himself to climb to the Moon, to set the Thunder to a Tune, or any other Evident Impossibility. This was the case of the Generality of the more learned *Heathens*. Their Reason told them, there was a *First Being*, and *Aristotle's* Acute Wit

did

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did, moreover, gather by his Speculation that Man's Happiness consisted in an *Indeficient Contemplation* of his Sublime *Essence*; but, wanting *Hope* to attain to that Blissful Object, he never raised his Heart to *love* him, or do the least thing *for his sake*, even tho' it suited with his own Speculative Principles; nor to stand up dutifully for his Honour, which he saw Idolatrously conferr'd on the meanest and basest Creatures. They *knew G O D* (says St. Paul, *Rom. 1. 21.*) but *they did not glorifie him as G O D*, but went along carelessly with the Rude Rabble in their Irreligious Superstitions; and why? but because they had no *Hope* of attaining this Happiness, which some of them knew by their *Dry* and *Unactive* mere Speculation.

5. After we have gain'd the Knowledge, that an Object propos'd to us is not only *Good in it self*, but also *Our Good*, as being both *Agreeable* to our Nature, and *Attainable* by us; immediately the Soul begins to *move* and *bestir* her self to *gain* and *enjoy* it, by using such other Operations, as are

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proper and peculiar to her. The first of which is to *Intend*, or aim to get it. She *proposes* then, and *prefixes* it to her self, as a *Butt*, or *Mark* at which she is to level her endeavours. For which purpose, she *consults* with her own Thoughts what *Means* 'tis best to use for the compassing of what she had *Intended*. If diverse Means occur, then, in the next place, she *Elects*, or makes Choice of those she judges most Proper and Effectual. And lastly, she *applies* and *makes Use* of those Means she has *chosen*, or pitch't upon, to obtain what she had *Intended*; or puts her Designs in *Execution*, and *actually* pursues her *Beloved* and *Intended End*.

6. See here the orderly Train, or *Series* of our Spiritual Acts, consider'd as they tend to *Mortality*, expos'd in short to our view. The Object affects our Understanding, or is *received* Spiritually in our knowing Power. If it be represented as *Indifferent* to us, or, if *Agreeable*, as *Impossible* to be attained, we can have no other Interest in it, but to gaze at it, or, (if it be some considerable Ground of Truth) to *speculate* upon

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upon it. If it appears as in *some* sort *Agreeable* to the Man, whose Form the Soul is, and, withal, as *Attainable*, she entertains *Hope* of it, and thence *loves* it; and by much considering it, *conceits*, or (as we may say) *lays to heart* that 'tis *hers*, or the Man's *Good*: Whence she is dissatisfied, restless, and ill at ease, 'till her Wish, or Desire of it be Accomplisht. Hereupon, to gain this *Satisfaction*, she employs her most vigorous Thoughts towards the Attaining it; that is, she *Intends* it, and *purposes* to get it; for which, being now *Resolv'd* upon it as her *End*, she *consults*, or considers *how*, or by what *means* to compass it. Then she makes *Choice* of, or pitches on those Means, that appear most likely, or most effectual; and, lastly, the Man thus affected and directed, bends his endeavours to urge those Useful Means to *Execution*, in order to the attaining it *Actually*.

7. We may observe that each of those Acts which are *Subsequent*, does naturally *presuppose*, and (as it were) include the *Foregoing* Ones. For, no

Man can *Actually* pursue an *End*, but he must first *Chuse*, or pitch upon some determinate *Means* to obtain it; nor can he *make Choice* of such a Means without *consulting* with his Thoughts, *which* means is *best*; nor *consult* which is the best way to attain it, if he does not first *intend* to get it; nor can he *intend* to get it, if he does not apprehend it is some way or other *his* Good, and thence *Love* it; nor can he *Love* it, if he did not judge it *Compassable*, or not *Impossible*, and thence *Hope* for it: Nor could he *Hope* for it, if he did not first apprehend that the Thing, or *Object*, is, and that it is of such a determinate Nature; without which, it could not appear to be *Agreeable* to him, or worthy to be *loved*, *hop'd* for, or regarded. How Useful this Reflexion on the *Order* of our *Interior Acts*, is, will be seen hereafter; or rather it may serve for many more excellent Uses than I shall have occasion for in this following Treatise.

8. It would not be amiss, tho' I run some hazard of deviating from the Rules of exact Method, to shew here by

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by an *Instance*, which frequently happens, the Usefulness of this Doctrine. A Devout Person finding himself detain'd long in a Temptation, whether of Anger, Pride, Unchastity, Avarice, &c. finds withal that, while the Temptation lasts, he has some *Delight*, or Complacency in the Inferiour part of his Soul, (that is in his *Fancy*, or his *Appetite*, by which *only* our Enemy can *begin* to tempt us) and hence falls into doubt whether he *consented* to it, & by doing so, incurr'd the Guilt of Mortal Sin. Let him examin his Interior by what's here said, and he may easily gain light how things stand with him. First, he found the Object propos'd to his *Soul* by his *Fancy*, to be, in some regard or other, very *Agreeable* to him. There's no harm in this, for so it passes in all *Temptations* whatever, even in the Greatest Saints; nor could it be a *Temptation at all*, were it otherwise. I, but he found himself at that present much *delighted* with it; or his Inferiour part, in which *Concupiscence* resides, much *affected*, or *taken* with it. No harm yet, by the Grace of God: for

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'tis impossible in Humane Nature, but we should find *delight* in what's any way *Agreeable* to us, if no better Proposal renders it *disrelishing*, which 'tis suppos'd does not as yet happen. Besides, this does not as yet advance farther than *bare Temptation*; in which, were not the Object it proposes, *delightful*, it could not tempt us; nor could we, if this were not so, have any *Merit* in resisting it. Hitherto then all is meerly *Natural*, and not at all *Moral*. But, he remembers this *Delight run on*, and *continu'd* a long time. Neither can this *alone* be any Sin, for still it remains no more than meerly *Natural*, unless *Reflexion* or *Deliberation* comes; only which can render such an Act *Moral*. 'Till then, 'tis no more but a continu'd and *unchecked Fancy*, and resembles a drowsie *dozing* in comparison of that *Free* and *Deliberate Reason* of which we make use when we are *Attentive* to what we do, and is little more than what passes in a *Brute*. I, but the Temptation now grown vehement, begins to *allure* the *Superiour Part* of his Soul, (where
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only our *Principles, & Intentions* are laid up) and to solicit it to joyn with its Party; and puts it (as it were) to *declare it self* whether it will go along with Concupiscence, or no; that is; indeed, whether it will contradict, in practice, all those *Principles*, which it held Sacred and adher'd to formerly, and forgo all it's Hopes of Heaven, for the satisfaction of a present Passion. How unlikely it is, that any Person that follows even the Customary Devotions all good Christians use, should easily *consent* to make such an Unequal and desperate Exchange, may quickly be seen; unless he have strangely dispos'd his Soul beforehand, by a *continued and voluntary* dallying with the well-lik'd Temptation, and enur'd himself presumptuously to the committing Venial Sins *frequently* and carelessly; which renders it just in God to leave him absolutely and totally to himself in such occasions. But to proceed with our present Discourse.

9. This importunate *soliciting* the Superiour part of the Soul to abandon her long-espous'd *Principles*, cannot
but

but *shock* the Soul, and *awaken* those *Principles* either to exert themselves in *opposing* the wicked Suggestion, or else to let the Soul *truckle* and *yield* to it. Here it is then that our *Reason* and *Superiour* Part begin to work; nor is there *any* great danger of Mortal Sin, till it comes to this *Crisis*: For the Soul cannot be finally *ruin'd* but by some *Defective* Operation of *her own*. She is (as our first Discourse Sect. 5. shew'd) of such a noble Nature, that Corporeal Impulses, which were the *only* Sticklers while she was *tempted*, cannot *hurt* or *alter* her, unless she *will* herself. Nothing can cut the Diamond but the Diamond-dust; nor can any thing *harm* a *Rational* Soul, but the *ill-using*, or *abusing*, her *Reason*. We must gain then the knowledge, whether she *yielded* to the Temptation, and so plung'd her self into Mortal Sin, or no, by *Reflecting* on those *Spiritual* Acts of the Soul her self, which we cannot but know. If then she, acting deliberately, makes Choice of that Temporary Good for her *last End*, she could not but seriously *intend*, or *aim* to get that End;

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End; and if she heartily *Intended* to get it, she will fall to consider, or *consult* with her thoughts *how* to *compass* it; and to make Choice of, or *Elect* those Means which seem the best and most Effectual to gain it; and so resolve to put, as soon as she can, the Pursuit of it in *Execution*. If then the Person thus tempted, finds *these* ill Symptoms in himself, he must conclude he has renounced God's Service, and made himself a *Slave* to the Devil. If he finds *none* of these Subsequent Acts, but on the contrary, that when the Temptation came to contrast with his former Principles, he found a *Repugnance*, *Uneasiness*, and *Trouble*, then, notwithstanding the sensible Delight which the Temptation offer'd, his Soul is safe from any *Mortal* Wound; and, moreover, according to the Vigour of his Resistance, he may hope for a Triumphant Crown of Glory from his dear Saviour, for fighting his Battle so faithfully, and subduing, through his Grace, his and our old and most Obdurate Enemy. But, to resume the thread of my former Discourse.

10. From

10. From what is said above, we may clearly see the difference between *Speculation* and *Morality*. The Operations of the former are terminated in putting the *Understanding* in possession of the *Truth* of the Object. The latter affects the *Will* with the *Goodness* of it, or the *Agreeableness*. it has either to our *Corporal* or *Spiritual* Nature. In the former, the Operations of the Soul begin by *apprehending*, or *taking* the Nature of the thing *into* our *knowing* power, contemplating it *there*, or as it exists *within us*. In the latter, the Soul is carried, or *moved* towards the Object that is *without us*; and aims at our *Conjunction* with it; and this according to the Being it has *out of the Soul*, or *in it self*. The Soul is at first merely *Passive* in the *Former*, since the *Proposal* of the Object does beget in us some *knowledge* of it, whether we will or no; whence, by the way there can be no manner of Sin in thus *knowing* or *apprehending* any Object, tho' this Act of Knowledge continues a long time; no more than there is in knowing the Signification of the Words which express it;

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it; all Sin consisting in the *Prædial* Judgment that such an unlawful Object is to be pursu'd: But, in the *latter*, the Soul is always *Active*, as appears by its several Acts of *intending*, *consulting*, or *casting about* how to obtain it, *Electing* the fittest Means to do this; & lastly, in *using* or *applying* those Means to pursue, *strain after*, and *reach* what it had *design'd*, *aim'd at*, or *intended*.

11. And hence we may gain an Evident knowledge, *what* this Act, call'd *Intention*, is, *in what* it consists, and how it *differs* from all our other Acts. For since no Man *intends* to get a thing which he does not *Love*; 'tis manifest that the *Intention* of pursuing any End, presupposes, and includes in it self the *Love* of it, and therefore is so far an Act of the *Will*. Next, it *superadds* to Love, which is an Act of our *Will*, that 'tis a *Direction* of our Actions to the prosecution of such an End; which *Love* alone is not: For, as the *Will* is a *blind Power*, and only the *Understanding* is the Souls *Spiritual Eye*; so *Love*, which is the Act of the *Will*, if we consider it *alone*, ac-

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according to its precise Notion, is *Blind* too; whereas *Intention* imports the Levelling all the other Acts of the Soul, in order to attain the Good we desire, which evidently includes an Act of the *Understanding*, since he who aims at Mark, must see it. Whence *St. Thomas of Aquin*, defines *Intention* to be an Act of the *Will*, considered as having join'd with it the *Virtue* or Power of the *Understanding*, directing, our other Actions that tend to obtain the End Intended.

12. Hence *Intention* being the same as *Love* of our End, exercis'd by the *Understanding* exciting and directing it, the *Whole Soul*, both according to her Faculties of *Understanding* and *Will*, is in Act when she *Intends*. Hence also follows, that tho' the *Will* carries the Soul towards the Object, as it is *Good*, or *Agreeable* to us; yet 'tis only the *Intention* that carries us towards it as our *End*; since to *Intend*, or *Aim* at a thing, is the same as to make it our *Ultimate End*, *Butt*, or *Mark*. Hence, lastly, *Intention* does not only prefix our *End* to us, and addicts us to it; but,

(as

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(as was shewn above) considering it as including the *Understanding*, it does moreover produce, or set on work all the Train of our *Subsequent Acts*, and ranges them in due order to attain the *Good*, or *End* we aim'd at. So that, summing up together all those considerations, we find that *Intention* is a Humane Act, in which All the Powers of the Spiritual part of Man do meet; and that, therefore, it is the *First Spring* of all *Morality*; from which all our other, both *Interiour Moral Acts*, and our *Outward Actions*, which tend to the Prosecution of our Intended *End*, are originiz'd.

13. From all these Premises is deduced, this Evident Conclusion, that if our *Intention* be right, or set on our *True last End*, or *Supreme Good*, the *Whole Man*, (as to his *Spiritual* part) must necessarily be *Substantially Good* likewise as to his *Morality*; If wrong set, and aiming at a *False Last End*, or chiefly placed on a *False Good*, his *Rational Nature* is *totally deprav'd*; so that all he does, is *Sinful*; and, if not rectify'd, he must at length become most *Miserable*, and *lost Eternally*. DIS-

DISCOURSE III.

*Of the Goodness, or Badness of
our Intentions.*

1. **W**HAT is said hitherto, is generally, no more than what is found in all Humane Nature in Common; and, consequently, in the Actions of every Man living, whether he be a Christian, or Heathen; and this, as to every End he pursues through the Course of his whole Life. For (as was said) no Man can endeavour to acquire any Good, or compass any End, without bethinking himself of the Means how to obtain it; and choosing or preferring such a determinate Means, before others; nor can he do this without consulting with himself, or considering what Means is better, or more likely: Nor does any Man consult, or determin of any Means to attain a thing, unless he Intend to get it: Nor
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could he *Intend* to get it, but he must *love* it: Nor could he *love* it without knowing that it is *Agreeable* to him, and withal, *Attainable*; without which it could not be thought to be his *Good*, or worthy to be *sought* after.

2. Nor, does this manner of proceeding to Action, spring from our Original Corruption, but (as is evident from the precedent Discourse) from the Nature of *Man*, as he is *Rational*; that is from his very *Essence*, given him by *God*; which *Divine Grace* does not *destroy* or *impair*, but *perfect*. Wherefore 'tis manifest that *Christians* in their Actions done out of *Supernatural* Motives by the Assistance of *Grace*, do observe the same tenour of proceeding, and consequently (the Change of our *End*, and of our Motives being allowed for) we are to discourse in the *same* manner of these *Latter*, as we did of the *Former*, viz. That none can love *Heaven*, as their last *End*, unless he judged it to be most *Agreeable* to the Soul, or her true *Happiness*, and also *Attainable* by us, and therefore *our Good*; Nor can he

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Intend to work for it, unless he thus *Love'd* it; nor *lay*, or *use* Means to acquire it, unless he *Intended* it.

3. Wherefore, we come now to apply the Principles laid hitherto, to *Christian Life*, which consists in the pursuit of *Eternal Happiness* in the clear Vision of the Adorable Deity; that so we may gain the Knowledg how to live as we ought, and manage our Endeavours after the *best* manner to attain that Blissful State. In performing which Task, if it pleases the Divine Wisdom and Goodness to *enlighten my Darkness*, and *strengthen my Weakness* to deliver my Thoughts truly and intelligibly, and to open the Understandings of my Readers to comprehend rightly what is said; it may be hop'd, that their Devotions will be *Solid* and *Regular*; and that every *Step* they take towards their *Last End*, will be *Direct* and *Steady*; not Staggering into the *By-paths* of Errour, thro' their giving too much credit to *Delusive Fancy*; nor Wavering, thro' ambiguous *Doubts* and *Scruples*, which make good well-meaning Souls *lagg* in their

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Journey to Heaven; nor will they be hurry'd aloft *fanatically* into the Pathless Air of *Ungrounded Imaginations*; but all their Spiritual Thoughts and Affections will be more *Sober, Firm, and Orderly*; or to sum up all in those most Emphatical words of the Holy Scripture (Jo. 4. 23.) they will become *True Adorers*, and adore, or serve God in Spirit and Truth; which that they may do with *Comfort*, is the sole Aim of this whole ensuing Treatise. This then being a matter of such vast concern, that it includes all the Duties of a Christian, especially of those who desire to *improve* themselves to a fair Degree in Spirituality; I hope every such Reader will think it worth a little Pains, to reflect on what *has*, or *shall* be here *said* for the Information of their Judgments; and not out of a *malice*, or Squeamishness, think themselves excused from heeding any Rational Discourses which tend to that End, unless they can at first sight comprehend them with the same facility as they do a *Romance*, which was only intended to please the *Fancy*.

4. We

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4. We are to note then, that all our *Spiritual Powers* and *Actions*, both of our Understanding, and of our Will, which best qualifie us as we are Men, are to be *rated* and *valued* according to the worthiness of the OBJECTS about which they are employ'd, or the End for which they are *designed*. Hence a Physician is more worthy to be esteem'd than a Mechanick; and a *Divine*, more than a *Physician*; because the *Health* of the Body is more valuable than *External Conveniences*; and the *Soul's health* and welfare is more to be prized than the health of the *Body*. Hence Kings, and all Sovereign Powers are esteemed *Sacred*, because their Employ is the Governing a kind of *Universality* of Men within such a Sphere; which makes their Office and Dignity approach nearer to that of God Himself, who is the Supreme Governour of the *whole Universality* of Creatures. And, for the same Reason, Inferiour Magistrates receive the *Degrade* of their respective Dignities, according as they superintend over a *larger* or *narrower* Province. The same

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passes in the Degrees of the Moral Goodness, or Badness of our *Affections* and *Intentions*, which are Acts of the *Will*. The Soul is (as it were) Spiritually marry'd to the Object on which she casts her *Chiefest Love*, or accepts it as her *last End*; so that, as in Civil Contracts, she that is married to another, acquires such a Degree of Dignity as is that of the Person to whom she is *espous'd*; If to a Gentleman, she is a Gentlewoman; if to a Knight, or Lord, she is a Lady; if to a Duke, she is a Dutches; if to a Prince, or King, she is a Princess, or a Queen; so it really passes in our foresaid *Moral Actions*. If the Soul sets her *First*, and *Final Affection* on God, she is *Divine*; If on empty *Applause*, or *Praise*, she is just as much worth as so much *articulate Air* pufft out of the Mouths of ill-judging and fickle-humour'd Mortals: If on *Gold*, she is no more valuable than is that shining *Mineral*: If on *Brutal pleasures*, she is in the sight of God and his Angels, of no more worth than a despicable *Brute*, &c. Our Soul, I say, is

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of such a Nature, that, according to the worth of that to which she gives up her *First* Affection, *such* she is exactly to be reputed, and *no better*. So that it lies within the Compass of her Spiritual Power, the *Will*, either to dilate it self so by *Charity*, or to *Love* God so perfectly, and (thence to know him in proportion) as to transcend the dignity of an *Angel*; or, by *restraining* and *cramping* (contrary to their Natures) her *spacious* Understanding and Will (which were made to grasp at an *Infinite Truth*, and an *Infinite Good*) to affect some pittiful sort of Object, and thence to debase her self to the very *lowest* rank of Beings, and the very worst *Dregs* of *Matter*; and become the *vilest*, and most contemptible piece of the whole Creation. Whence her Spiritual and Moral Actions, and most particularly her Intentions, must partake of the same Lot; and accordingly will become *Morally Good* or *Bad*.

5. Hence all the Intentions of the Heathens in their wrong-levell'd Devotions and Idolatrous Worship of

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their *False Gods*, tho' they were never so zealous in performing them, were absolutely & utterly *wicked*, or perfectly *Bad*; because their *Intention* directed them to a *wrong last End*, or to an Object which could not in any manner deserve that Adoration, or be their *Final Happiness*. Whence follows, that all such Acts of theirs (tho' they were never so careful in performing them) were in reality so many Mortal Sins; because they addicted their Souls either to some *Fictitious Chimera* which *was not*, or had *no Being* at all; or, to some *perishable Creature*; or, perhaps, (as the Scripture does often tell us) to the *Devil* himself. Whether some of them, too wise not to discern the Nonsense and Folly of Polytheism, or the *multiplicity* of Gods, might not mean by those current expressions of *Jupiter*, *Neptune*, *Fortune*, or such like, some Attribute of the World's Governour, and intend to adore *him*; and thence as in the Law of Nature, obtain his Favour, or be acceptable to him, I am not wise enough to determin. We might be tempted to hope well of

Socrates, Plato, Tmoleon, and such others, were we but well assured that they stood up for the *Unity of the true God*, and decry'd Polytheism, then in outward appearance only in vogue: But the discussing such Points, is besides our present purpose.

6. What more concerns us, is to reflect, that, for the same reason, all the Actions performed by *Bad Christians* who know and acknowledge there is a *God*, whom only their Principles tell them they are to *serve, adore, and love* as their *Sovereign Good*, if they do notwithstanding (contrary to his *Divine Command*, and to *Common Sense*) set their *First Affection* on *Ambition, Riches, vain Glory, Bodily Pleasures, &c.* are likewise *highly Sinful*; because they spring from an *Intention* of pursuing a *False Good*, as their *Last End*, which could no way *perfect the Soul*, but *deprav'd, perverted, & debas'd* her *Noble Nature*, fram'd by her good *Creatour* to enjoy *Eternal Bliss* in the sight of his *Glorious Essence*; and declin'd her to such *Low and Narrow Objects*, which were so far
from

Of Good Intentions. 53.

from *satisfying* her, either here, or hereafter, that they rack her with violent Passions in *this World*, and leave her, at Death, *empty* and *miserable* for the loss of them: Nor only so, but by *distorting* her Will and Affection to pitch upon a *False Last End*, they render her for ever incapable of loving the *True One*; which *Love* is the only proper Disposition to invest her in Eternal Happiness. Such wicked Souls, tho' they *bear* the *Name*, and must, to their Torment, *wear* the *Badge* of *Christianity*, which they received in Baptism, are in effect, *Heathens* in their practice. For, what boots it whether they held and ador'd Dame *Venus*, (for example) and in imitation of her loose Goddessship, pursued lascivious pleasures; or that, tho' holding an infinitely-pure and *Holy* God, they did notwithstanding, defile themselves with all sorts of Brutish Impurity: Certainly, by how much their *Christian* profession is *more Holy* than the other, so much *more enormous* is the *Corruption* of it; and, if they die unrepentant, will expose them to incompara-

bly greater torments, or (as our B. Saviour expresses it) to be *beaten with more Stripes* than the worst of Heathens. Their acknowledgment, I say of God, and their knowledge of his Holy Law, will in a High measure enhance their Hell, and tear their Souls with a never-ceasing, and never-blunted Sting, for their foolish madness, in suffering themselves to be so gull'd by the Devil, as to prefer such a Bauble as a *Momentary Content* in a poor wretched perishable *Creature*, before *never-ending Joys* in the Sight of God, and the Company of his Holy Saints and Angels.

7. On the other side, and for the same reason given above, it is equally Evident, that no Soul can miscarry Eternally, which, when it leaves the Body, does truly Intend *Heaven* as its only *Good*, or *Last End*; for such an *Intention* presupposes and includes a prevalent *Love* of God above Creatures; which, being the same as true *Charity*, the proper disposition to *see God*, cannot fail, sooner or later, to bring her to that Glorious and Happy State.

DISCOURSE IV.

*What depraves, or quite perverts
the Goodness of our Intention;
and the Remedies against that
Danger.*

1. **I**T appears evidently from our former Discourse, that, while our *Primary Intention* continues directed to *Heaven*, the Soul remains *Substantially Good*, and in a certain way to Salvation. But, alas! while we carry our corrupt Nature about us, and are, besides, surrounded with a World abounding with Vanity of all kinds, and ill Examples of wicked Livers, of both which our Ghostly Enemy makes use to debauch us from the Duty we owe to our dear God; none can without special Revelation, be *assured* of his *Perseverance*. We are here in a State of *Mutability*, and our Weakness ex-

poses us to change our very *best* Resolutions. Even great Saints have fallen from Grace; and there are few of those that *stand*, but they often *stagger*. Our Christian Life is a continual *Warfare*; in which many are spiritually *kill'd* by *altering* their Good Intentions; and seldom do the most dexterous Fighters escape without some *wound* or other. Wherefore, nothing can more concern us than to *gain Light* what it is that endangers to *deprive* us of our Spiritual Life, by corrupting our *Good Intentions*; by *what means* we are generally *drawn* into that danger; and how to *avoid* it.

2. In order to clear which Points, we are to lay those Evident Principles. *First*, that in every Humane Action, that is, when we act *Rationally*, or *deliberately*, we do always prefix to our selves, or *Intend* some *End*. *Secondly*, That therefore 'tis impossible but that in every such Action, we must also *Intend* some *Last End* or other; or do our other Actions with some kind of Subordination to it. For, if the End we aim at, is not the *Last*, it must be
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embraced as a *Means* to some farther End: and the same may still be said of this farther, as was of the other; so that in every such Action, we must either refer all those *intermediate* Ends (if I may be allow'd to call them so) to some *Last*, or else we must still go on referring to some farther End, and this *Endlessly*; which supposed, we could not Act for any End at all; since none can know, nor consequently aim at an End which is *Ininitely distant* from that for which we Act Immediately. Again, if among those *many* Ends which we know and intend, none of them be *finally intended*, or the *Last*; it follows that it must (as was now said) be *intended* as a *Means* to it, since the *Means* is that which *relates* to the *End*, and is some way or other *necessary*, or else *convenient* to compass it; which it cannot be, if the *End* it self be not determinately known: Whence, unless this Discourse holds, we could never Act for the *End*, nor the *Means* neither; that is, indeed, we could never Act at all. Objections against this Discourse we will refer to what follows here-

after, when we come to treat of Scruples.

3. The third Principle, is, that, as we are necessitated to *Intend* or *Aim* at some *Last End* in every Humane Action we do, so we cannot *change* our former Good Intention, which included a predominant Love of Heaven, and directed our other Actions to attain it; but we must *substitute* and *embrace* in its stead, *Another Last End*, and pitch our Chief Affection *on it*, and apply our most Vigorous Intention to *pursue* it. Nor, (the *Former End* which rendered our Intention *Good*, being supposed to be Heaven) can this new-chosen Last End, which we now chiefly *intend* to get, be any thing but some *Created Good*, or some *Temporary End*; whether it be Empty Honour, Noisie Fame, Proud domineering Ambition, Worldly Riches, Bodily Pleasure, Satisfaction in being *Reveng'd*, or any other such like Trifling Content.

4. These things being so, our precise and main Duty, is, to keep a watchful Eye over our *Affections*, and to observe carefully, *which way*, or to *what kind* of Objects

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Objects they *sway* our Souls; which we may easily gather by the running of our thoughts frequently and warmly upon *them*, by our often talking of them, or our acting beyond prudence to attain them. If we once perceive that some *Created* Foppery begins to gain an Ascendent over our *Will*, and to court it with its gay Appearance of being *highly Agreeable*, and Taking with us, (which kind of Proposals we use to call *Temptations*) let us strive with all our might to disentangle our selves from that *alluring Snare*: Resting assured, that our Spiritual Enemy, the Devil, is then playing his *chief prize* to bring our Soul under his Tyrannous Slavery. To which end, he will in our Fancy pourtray *very lively* that sophisticate Temporal Motive, and varnish it over with a glossy and *amiable outside*; and thence, working on our *Inferiour* part, Concupiscence, or Appetite, (which is subject to the Dominion of *Fancy*, and which he had already made *pliable* to his Suggestions by his first Gift, *Original Sin*,) he uses all his Arts to persuade us, how *happy*

we

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we shall be, if we can but once enjoy that *ridiculous banble*. Tho' the Sly Fiend, who dandles and lulls our Will so sweetly with those pleasing Dreams of our Imagination, knows full well at the same time, that after we have got that *gilded Toy*, it will, when once had, in a short time, leave our Soul *dissatisfied*, her vast Capacity *Empty*; and, in all likelihood, be a *vexation* to her here, and, if her wicked trucking her *Blissed God*, for a *pittiful Creature*, be not heartily *repented* of, will plunge her into a Hell of Misery hereafter.

§. Here then, I say, it is, if ever, that a Christian Soul ought to exert all her best Strength, and make use of all her Spiritual Weapons to guard her *good Intentions*, (in which consists her *Spiritual Life*) that they be not *corrupted*. She is to arm her self with those *Great and Sure Truths* which Faith has taught her, and endeavour to make them *Lively* to her Thoughts, by reflecting, that, if she yields to the Assaults of her Ghostly Enemy, she falsifies her *Vow* made in Baptism to fight Christ's Battles; she forfeits her
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Christianity by *deserting* his Colours, and running away *cowardly* to his Enemy, the Devil; and enlists her self among the Crew of his black Fiends. She gives her self up entirely to his Conduct; and *whitber* he will lead her, she cannot but foresee with Horrour. She separates her self from her God, and consequently from all that's Good; she renounces her fellowship and friendship with all the Glorious Court of Heaven; and all this, for the present enjoyment of some worthless Trifle, which she will quickly be weary of, and perhaps after a while, *hate* as much as she *lov'd* it, and even hate *her self* for being so *fool'd* by it. Let her seriously consider what an unaccountable and shameful Indignity it is to suffer her self to be *bubbled* to her face, with the most abominable open Lyes that could be invented, *viz.* that the Complying with a *foolish* Passion is more to be valued than the clearest Dictates of Reason, and the wise Inspirations of Grace; that the Enormous Deformity and *Ugliness* of Vice is more to be lov'd than the *Beauty* of Virtue and Holiness, which

which is so agreeable to our true Nature, and so amiable to the Eye of our Reason. That the Society of *Belial*, & his perfidious Adherents, is more to be desired than the Communion of *Christ* and his Holy Saints and Angels; and, lastly, (than which no Lie can be so extravagantly senseless) that a poor *Indigent Creature*, which is next to *Nothing*, is preferable to the Enjoyment of the most *Adorable Deity*, who is Infinite in all his Attributes; in whose glorious Being are center'd, as in their Source, all whatever can be conceived to be *Good, Attractive, and Charming* in Creatures; and in whose Beatifying Sight is found the *Fulness of Joy*, & the most *ravishing & Soul-satiating Felicity*.

6. Above all, let her not rely on *her own* frail strength, but apply her self to the *Divine Goodness*, and with humble, fervent, and importunate Prayers, implore his ever-ready Assistance. Let her with a *free confidence* discover her condition to her Confessor, and take his advice. Let her read devout Books; especially those that contain such discourses as she has found

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found to have been, in time of need, *suitable*, and *beneficial* to her formerly : Such Motives as these will do her most service ; they being like weapons *already fitted* to her hand by Custom ; and most *Taking*, and withal most *Easie* for her to wield. Let her not suffer her self to be flatter'd with that Common suggestion of the Devil, that God is *Merciful*, and that upon her future Repentance, he will *easily* pardon her, and restore her to his Favour. For, how can she ever know she shall have the Grace to repent ? Such rash and *misful presumption* upon God's Goodness, after having abus'd it, *doubles* the Sin ; and above any other fault, *precludes* all Hopes of his future Assistance. Perseverance in Virtue is not due, even to the greatest Saint living, tho' he lives up to a high pitch of Virtue ; but he is commanded to be perpetually *Vigilant*, and to *work out his Salvation with Fear and Trembling* ; much less is *Recovery* from Sin, and a *new Acquisition* of Grace and Virtue likely to be had, when the Soul is *utterly indispos'd* for it, and *quite perverted* by Mortal Sin. The Devil
does

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does indeed, *promise* this very liberally to Souls when they are running into Sin, and do yet retain some *small* care of their *Salvation*, at least some *Dread of Hell*; but is God's *Mercy* bound to see the *Devil's promise* perform'd; or take care that the *Father of Lies* should keep his word to those who are assur'd by the Holy Ghost that he is a *Liar from the beginning*, and yet they would needs trust him, rather than God who is *Truth it self*?

7. In the next place, let the tempted Soul take Courage by stirring up that Excellent Virtue of Divine Hope; without giving way to *Fear*, to that Degree as to think it impossible to resist such plausible Temptations strengthened by the *whole bent* of corrupt Nature. Such a *Fear* is an evident sign of a lurking *Pride*, and *self-reliance*; for, surely, none can think it impossible for God's omnipotent Grace to enable us to *resist*, and (which is more) to *conquer*. True, it is a great Terroure to a Pious Soul, thus beset with Enemies, to see her self fiercely assaulted on all sides, while she considers that she hangs by the

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the *small weak thread* of her own *mutable* Free-will. But then, when she comes to reflect on the gracious Promise of our *Good God* (in whom is all our strength) made to her by his Holy Apostle St. Paul, (1 Cor. 10. 13.) *Fidelis autem Deus est qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis, sed faciet etiam cum tentatione proventum ut possitis sustinere.* *God is Faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above your strength; but, when the Temptation assaults you, will make provision that you may be able to bear it; when I say, she considers this, she cannot (without distrusting the Divine Veracity, on which is built all our Faith) have any Reason to despond, while she relies and holds fast to such a powerful Assistant. Let her reflect that she has, withal, the united force of the whole Host of Heaven, the Blessed Angels and Saints, on her side; who are an over-match for Lucifer, & all his buffie Crew; who fought him once in open Field, overthrew and beat him blind; so that he was forced, with shame and confusion, to run away out of the Lists, and hide his baffled and cowardly head*
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in the Dark lurking-hole of Hell. Those Triumphant and Glory-crowned Victors, tho' enjoying now their own Happiness in the blisful Sight of their dear God, do, notwithstanding, bear such an affectionate Charity towards those Souls that are *Militant* here on Earth, that (as our Blessed Saviour assures us) they do heartily *rejoyce at the Repentance of a Sinner*. And can we think, but that, (for the same Reason) they are not also highly concern'd for the *preservation* of a Good Soul *from Sin*, which is now fighting the *same* battle which themselves did heretofore, and maintaining the same Cause which they did so zealously defend formerly? Let them open their Eye of *Faith*, and they will see, if they look up, our good Saviour standing ready with a *Crown* in his Hand to reward their *faithful Service*. For, indeed, the time of *Temptation* is the *Harvest-Season* of good Souls; in which they may *reap* a *fuller Crop* of Reward in a small time, than they could *glean*, perhaps in a Year, by their daily *Devotions*, and other good works which were performed with
Ease,

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Ease, and cost them no great Struggle.

8. Lastly, to keep up their *Hope*, and preserve them from *desperately Fearfulness*, which is the next Degree to *Yielding*; they may consider how Certain we may be to Conquer, if a right Method be taken. Let them be sure not to rely on their *own* feeble Nothingness, but with an humble & firm Confidence, lay fast hold on God's *Assistance*, which is our only *Refuge* and true *Strength*. Let them *fix* this great and evident Truth *deeply* in their Understanding, that as we are *nothing* of our selves as to our *Being*, but received it entirely from the hand of our Omnipotent *Creatour*; so we are *nothing* of our selves as to our *Moral Goodness*, but receive it totally from God's *Bounty* and *Mercy*. King *David's* Prayer, was, *Cor mundum crea in me Deus; Create, O Lord, in me a clean Heart*; in which Petition the word [*Create*] is most proper, and most significant; and, if well reflected on, will instruct us abundantly, that our *total Dependence* is on our Heavenly Father; from whom only descends every

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ry good and perfect Gift, and all our power to resist Temptations; for which therefore, we are taught daily to petition in the *Lord's Prayer*. That great Servant of God, *Gregory Lopez*, had once a spiritual wraſtling with the Devil, which was ſo violent, that Blood burſt out of his Ears and Noſtrils: And how did he defend himſelf? Only by ſaying heartily his accuſtomed Ejaculation which he had repeated three Years together every breath he took [*Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven, Amen. Jeſus*] Or by ſaying [*O Lord, thou art a Father, & all things are done in thy preſence, and with thy Will.*] Let us caſt ourſelves wholly on God, totally deveſting ourſelves of our own Ability; and we ſhall by this means, make uſe of His power, be ſtrong in Him, and thro' his all powerful Aid, repel all the Fiery Darts of our Enemy. The weakeſt Soul, thus ſtripping her ſelf of all ſelf-reliance, and placing her whole refuge in God's Goodneſs, whoſe power is perfected in Weakneſs, is able to Baffle all the Wit and Power of Hell, and is altogether Invincible.

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DISCOURSE V.

What Weakens the Vigour of our Good Intentions; and how it may be prevented and avoided.

I. **T**HUS much for securing our *Good Intentions*, (in which consists the *Spiritual Life* of our Soul) from being *substantially* changed; that is, *corrupted*, and totally *depraved*. We come in the next place, to consider those *Lesser*, but *Frequent* and *Common* Failings, call'd *Venial Sins*, which are ever and anon *crossing our Way* while we pursue those *Good Intentions*, and are going about to execute them. These do not indeed make us direct our *Leading* and *Chief Thoughts* and *Affections* to a *wrong Last End*; but yet they *dim* our sight to some degree, while we are aiming at the *True one*; Tho' our *main Intentions* do still mean *Heaven*, and
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do not *totally* deviate from that Mark at which they were chiefly levell'd; yet, while they are tending to it, our Affections do *flant* and *glance aside* by hitting upon occurring Worldly Objects; which something warps their *direct* flight towards it. They are the Devil's *small Game*, at which he will rather *play* than *fit out*; and, when he is hopeless to make well-meaning Souls to consent to *break* God's express Commands *directly*, at least he will set all his Engins on work to bring them to do their duties *imperfectly*; and if he cannot *crush* our *head*, he will (as Serpents use) endeavour to ly in wait to *pinch* us by the *Heel*.

2. Numberless are the occasions and in a manner, as many as are the several circumstances of our whole lives on which he lays hold to *enfeeble* the Intentions even of the most pious Christians, that so he may to some degree *byass* them from the exact Performance of their good purposes. The whole World is *woven* of Nets to *ensnare* us. Every step we make, we are, if we do not take good heed, in danger of being

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ing *Entrapt*; and our corrupt Nature inclines us to run voluntarily into the *Nooze*; nor does our ever-vigilant Enemy *sleep*, but is *watchful* to take all advantages against us. Interest tempts us to *Injustice*: *Agreeable* Objects court us to *over-affect* them; and *Disagreeable* One to *hatred* of them. If we *excel* others in Riches, Beauty, Dignity, good Parts, &c. we are apt to grow selfishly *Proud*; and if we *want* those advantages over others, we are in danger of growing *Envious* towards those that have them, and to *repine* at Providence for making us Inferiour to them in those regards. The *praises* and esteem of Friends, tempt us to *vain-glory*; the *Opposition*, *Disesteem*, and *Slanders* of Enemies, to *Anger*, *Uncharitableness* and *Revenge*. Our *Eating* and *Drinking*, do often invite us to *Excess*. Our *Recreations*, lull us on to *lose our time*, which we ought to esteem as our *Life*, and of which we must give an account to God, especially, if it makes us neglect *Necessary* Duties. Our *Cloaths* and *Dress*, tho' all of it perhaps was borrow'd from the most *despicable*

Spicable things in Nature, allure us to be *Ridiculously Proud*. All our Thoughts, Words and Actions are way-laid with the *Ambushes of Vanity*, self-*Complacence*, or arrogant *Boasting*. Poverty *dejects* us, and Riches *exalts* us above Measure. Affectation of being held better than others, is apt to *deprave* our best Actions; and even under our *Devotions*, *Prayers* and *Alms-deeds* there creeps in a secret desire of being held to be more *Godly* than our Fellow-Christians; which in time improving into *Hypocrisie*, may make us continue our *Prayers longer*, that we may be taken notice of to be *extraordinary*, and *above the Common*; which makes us *sin*, even when we should be praying *against Sin*. External Acts of *Fasting*, and of great Mortification, (which, it being Unusual, makes a great *Esclat* and Show in the Eye of the Vulgar) will, if not well guarded with Humility and Sincerity, hazard to puff us up with *Spiritual Pride*, and do us a thousand times more harm than the others did Good. *Voluntary Distractions* do often times render our *Prayers* themselves *Fruitless*. Zeal

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for Virtue, and for Religion, do too frequently degenerate into *Pharasaicalness*, Uncharitable *Contempt* and *Harshness* towards weak and frail Sinners; who, for any thing we know, held out longer against the Temptation than our selves should have done, do now (like the Penitent Publican) groan under the burthen of their Sins, daily implore God's Grace for their Amendment; and who, for their Humility, are perhaps in a *better* State in the sight of God than those self-conceited, and *self-canoniz'd Saints*, who so proudly *censur'd* them, and insulted over the Weakness of others, to vaunt and boast themselves to stand immovable by their own strength; whereas (poor Wretches!) they are by their *Spiritual Pride* fallen, in the mean time, much *lower*, and plung'd far deeper than those they so triumph over and *despise*.

3. Even the least of these Temptations, if we yield to them, (for I *insist* not on those which are *Mortal*, tho' I sometimes mentioned them for Company) will *weaken*, to some Degree, the

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Purity of our *Intentions*, by allowing some Pittance of our Affections to *By-ends*, which will check the *Free* and *Full Tendency* of them towards Heaven. I say again, not one of them, how slight so ever it may seem, but, if it be *voluntarily* embraced, and *fomented* with a frequent and *careless* Admission of it, will ripen and grow to such a *Monstrous Excess*, both as to the *Manner*, and the *Matter* it works upon, that it will hazard to wound our Soul *mortally*; So necessary a Lesson is it to resist *Beginnings*, how inconsiderable soever they may seem, & to *nip* Sin in the *Bud*; Nor is it less Prudent to be thus cautious, it being far *easier* to pull up a tender *Sprig*, than to extirpate and tear up by the Roots an *over-grown Tree*.

4. The overcoming the Temptations against Venial Sins, is the proper Task of those well-meaning Souls to whom I am here speaking. Already their *first Intention* is right set towards Heaven; there needs no more to qualify them for an *Immediate* possession of it at their *Death*, but to purify their Souls from this *Alloy* which yet sticks

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to them. This is the Field in which they are to fight; they see their Enemies before them; Christianity has furnish'd them with Weapons to gain greater Victories than *this*; their own experience having already taught them that they have subdu'd all their Affections for *Mortal Impurities*; so that here needs no more but to shew them how to *make use* of those Weapons, and to *encourage* them to fight. I hope none will think my meaning is, that every Soul I speak to here, must necessarily undergo *all* the Temptations above mentioned: I thought fit to enumerate as many sorts of them as generally are like to occur, that thus *fore-warn'd*, they may be *fore-arm'd* by being made aware of them. Nor let their *Multi-* *tude* deter them: Courage and Vigilance will easily bring them *under*, at least so far as will keep them from doing us any considerable prejudice. For, many times the Providence of our Heavenly Conductor orders it so, that some few of them should be left to keep us *exercis'd* in Virtue, and for our greater Merit in resisting them *continually*.

5. It would require a large Treatise to dilate upon the Particular ways how to make head against *all* these several Temptations abovementioned. Wherefore, all I can do in this small Treatise, is to propose *General Methods* to prevent their Malignity by way of *Antidote*; and, as it were, to *blunt* their Sting, that they may not pierce or wound the *Superiour* part of our Soul, however they may *perplex* the *Fancy*; and, as well as may be, to *disarm* and *enervate* them, which will make the Victory over them the easier.

6. The first Method shall be to Enter the Lists with *Courage*. To fight against our Ghostly Enemies is a *Christian's Vocation*, and most particular *Duty* which he vow'd in Baptism; and must we be afraid to follow our Calling? Heaven is not to be got with *sitting Idle*; nor can a Tryal be made of *Fidelity*, but by putting it to the *Test*, that is, by being *Tempted*. Holiest Saints have suffered the greatest Temptations; and our Saviour himself suffer'd the greatest of all, as far as *outward Proposals* went; for they were not able to make any In-

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ward Impression upon his Divinely-conceived Body. He that pretends to be exempt from Temptation, declares at the same time, that either he is *Insensible* of their Impulse, because he perpetually yields to them; or else, that he is born in the state of *Original Innocence*. It being then the very Badge and Office of every Christian to resist *Temptations* (which cannot be done unless we be tempted) why should we decline this Principal and Essential Duty, and (as it were) our *chief Vocation*? Let us then expect the assault of our *Ghostly Enemies* with *Courage* and a firm *Intrepidity*. *Alacrity* of Spirit is the true Temper of a *Christian*. Should Souldiers, when they come to fight, fall a trembling, that dastardly *Disposition* would appall their *Courage*, and enervate their *Vigour*. When, therefore, we pray in the Lord's Prayer that we be not led into *Temptation*, the meaning of it is not to beg we may not be tempted at all, without which, there could be no Merit; but, that the Temptation may not have the effect intended by the Devil our Tempter. Let us desie him to do

his worst, so God's Grace assists us to do *our best*; and then we may be sure it will turn to his Confusion and our Advantage.

7. But, Secondly, the Reason and Ground of this *Cheerfulness & Alacrity* here recommended, will *double* our Courage, and *assure* to us our Victory. 'Tis built (as was said lately) on the Faithful promise of him who is *Truth it self*, that. let us but have a *Will* to serve God, and to adhere to him, *He will not suffer us to be Tempted above our Strength*. This gives us a **Firm, Unshaken, and an Invincible Hope**: We know such a *Faithful* Engagement cannot fail us. If this be seriously laid to heart, it will be impossible to *doubt* of carrying the Victory even in our greatest Conflicts: who can want Courage, tho' tost in the most dreadful waves of Temptations when he is sure of such an *Anchor-hold*. Indeed, they may be very troublesome and Penal to Pure Souls, when God suffers them to continue some *long time* for his own *Greater Honour*, and their *Greater Good*, as it happened to *St. Paul* when he was assaulted and *buffetted*

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 ons, which no doubt were very *Odious*
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 Soul, which was ſo perfectly Holy;
 nay, it ſeems by our Saviour's Answer,
 that he was ſomething *afraid* of
 them too, while he conſidered only his
 own Strength; inſomuch, that he thrice
 beſought our Lord that that filthy
 Temptation might be taken from him:
 But he received back this Comfortable
 and Wiſeſt Answer, (it being, alone, e-
 nough to inſtruct us at once both to
 hope firmly, and humbly to reflect on
 what it is that our Strength depends;) *Sufficit tibi Gratia mea*; my Grace, it
 being all-Powerful and infinitely Superi-
 our to the Malice of the Devil, is *ſuffici-*
ent for thee. And leſt he ſhould diſtruſt
 (as he had good reaſon) his own weak-
 neſs, & thence come to dread he ſhould
 yield and fall into Sin; the reaſon of
 the former words is added (2 Cor. 12.9.)
For Power is perfected in Weakneſs; that
 is, the Power of my Grace could not be
 known to be *Invincible*, if Creatures
 were not *miferably weak*. What Com-
 fortable Words are theſe, which af-

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sure us that our own *weakness*, which is our only *Discouragement*, is a *Motive* and Inducement for our Good God to make us know and experience the *Invincible Prevalency* of *his Grace*! The result of which is this, that nothing *at all* can hinder us from being victorious over Temptations, if we have but a *Will* to avoid Sin; and, rejecting utterly *all* reliance on our *own* Strength, place our *Sole Support* on God's *all-sufficient*, and *all-powerful* Assistance.

8. And why should *well-meaning Souls*, or (as the Angels in their Hymn, which celebrated our Saviour's Nativity, calls them) *Homines bonæ voluntatis*, *Men of a good Will*, fear they shall not be successful in overcoming those *Lesser* Temptations to Venial Sins, when as they find that they have already, thro' God's Grace, overcome the *Greatest* already, which would have enveigled them to commit *Mortal* ones. Has he who is Conscious to himself he has subdu'd *Gyants*, any Reason to apprehend he shall not conquer *Dwarfs* and *Pig-*

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mies! Our good Intentions and Resolutions being to do God's Will in *Greater Matters*; (the *Greater* necessarily including the *Less*) must certainly have *more* power to make us break our Wills in such things as are *Trifles* in comparison, in case we do but *heed* them, and take care to apply our endeavours to root them out: Which who will not do if he duly considers what is said of them above, *Seet. 3*? Secondary Affections for *Creatures* (as all *Venial Sins* are) must be naturally *subordinate* to the Chief, or *Primary One*, which we suppose is, in such Souls, for *Heaven*: So that our work is *better half* done already, if we by Reflexion, make these Underlings to know their Supreme Governour, *Heavenly Love*, and not to dare to do any thing which is against his Interest. Let us but keep our Affections for *Creatures within Compass*, and in a due Obedience and Subordination to *Divine Charity*, which is in possession of the *Highest Seat* in our Soul, and *Venial Sins* will lose their sting, and the Devil, who promotes them, his Labour.

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9. But, it will be said that Mortal Sins are but *few*, and those so *openly* wicked and *shocking* to Conscience, that 'tis almost impossible for any Person imbu'd with Christian Principles, or even instructed in the Ten Commandments, not to be *aware* of them; whereas *Venial* Sins oftentimes are so *Trivial*, and, withal, so *frequent* in the World, that they many times surprize us, and are Indiscernable: nay, sometimes 'tis hard to know whether they be Sins or not: I Answer, as for the *last* of these Difficulties, the first Caution I shall give, is, not to be too nice in examining and judging of them, if they do not at first sight discover their Irregularity, (which is a sign they are Trivial) lest the Soul, if weak, should fall into the Sin of *Scruplesity*, which will do her ten times more harm than an Imperfection which is not easily discover'd: Next, the most compendious way is to observe what the Generality of Good Christians who live with a *due care* of their Souls, do, without scruple, practice; and what passes *without controul* amongst Persons held Vir-

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tuous and Pious ; and, lastly, to give heed to the Occasional Instructions which her Ghostly Director gives her in Confession.

10. As for her *surprize* by reason of their *Multitude*, and their *frequently* occurring ; let the Devout Soul that is careful of her Salvation (for I write only to such) take a short Review at night of what had past that day (to which the Reflexion on the Circumstances she had been in will much Contribute) and what kind of Actions, Words, or Thoughts had then occur'd ; and then examin by her known Christian Principles, and the passionate Impression which they made, what fault she has incurr'd ; especially as to our Neighbour, by that Golden Rule, given by our Blessed Saviour, *to do, (or say) to others, as we would have others do to us.* This done, it will not be hard to discern *what* sort of *Virtue* the Temptation had attackt, and how far she had yielded to it. When she has found out to what kind of Failings she is most obnoxious, let her next consider whether it sprung out of the *Circumstances*, or
from

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from her own *Inclinations*. If out of the *former*, let her arm her self with Good Intentions, and Resolutions, to behave her self more Christian-like, when the same *Circumstances* happen; and if need be, let her occasionally *retract* in discourse, or *mitigate* what she had been *positive* in before. If out of *bad Inclinations*, let her lay the Axe at the Root, and seriously endeavour to correct that *Inward Source*, out of which that *outward* Expression or Action sprung, according to the Doctrine delivered hereafter *Sect. 12.* otherwise it will turn into an *ill habit*, and be ever and anon breaking out into *Acts* like it self. To this end, let her make it part of her Prayer in the Morning (& perhaps it will be the most profitable part of it) to reflect upon her precise Duty to purifie her self, thro' God's Grace, of *that* Blemish, which she may be sure makes her *less pleasing* in the Eye of God and his Holy Saints, and to resolve to amend it by such prudent ways as her spiritual Guide shall advise. Let her forecast the likely occasions that brought her into that inconveniency; and

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and determine particularly how to bear her self, or what to do or say in such a Season. Lastly, let her, without wondering at her self she should be thus weak as to fall into the *same* faults often, or fretting her self at it, with a humble sorrow apply to her dear Lord in these or the like words. "Behold dear Saviour, how foolishly I have deviated from your most Pure and Perfect Law, and relinquisht your Holy Example, by which Rules I ought to govern every part of my Life! What can be expected from me, a Poor Creature made of nothing, but Weakness and Folly? I have done like my self in Sinning; do you, O God of Infinite Goodness, like your self in mercifully forgiving me, & strengthening me with your Heavenly Grace for the future, without which I can do nothing that's good.

11. Tho' you should fall an hundred times into the *same* fault, still do the *self same*, only adding a greater degree of *Shame* and *Humility* for your falling so frequently. And be assur'd of this, that whenever you grow weary of
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doing it so often, and entertain any thoughts of *leaving it off*, it is a sign you are guilty of some *self-reliance*, and have some tang of Spiritual Pride (to cure which perhaps may be the reason why the granting your Petition is so long deferr'd;) for if you rely'd wholly on God, why should you *cease* to solicit Him? Especially since you may be perfectly assur'd of this as an *Infallible Truth*, that the Divine Goodness is not angry, but very well pleas'd you should apply to him so often. He loves to be importun'd; and our Blessed Saviour has taught us by a very familiar Parable, (by which He exhorts us to this Perseverance in petitioning,) that even our selves, tho' we are not willing to grant a Request to another out of kindness, or goodness, yet we are in a manner forced to comply with his Request when he never leaves soliciting us. This is one of the occasions in which Heaven suffers Violence, and indeed it belongs to Infinite Goodness to suffer it self to be (as it were) forc'd and subdu'd by a poor Indigent Beggar; whose Earnestness, sprung from a real Necessity, will not
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permit him to cease his *clamorous Importunity*, or be said *Nay*. Let us then humbly *insist* still that God will hear our Prayers, and grant our Request; and, if we *continue* thus solliciting, I do not know *what* Venial Sin, tho' it were never so much affected by us, can long remain *unconquered*. One such Voluntary Prayer, which our *Need* and *sincere Desire* of acquiring some Virtue puts us upon, does *more* solid good to our Souls, than thousands of others *customarily* said or *repeated*. To strengthen this assertion, we may reflect that 'tis the constant Doctrine of the Holy Fathers of the Church, that 'tis uncertain whether *we* shall be heard or no, when we pray for *Temporal Goods* for our selves or others, nor yet when we pray for *Spiritual Goods* for others; but that we are always heard when we pray for Virtue or Spiritual Goods for *our selves*, in one Degree or other: especially when we pray with *Faith*, or not *doubting* but we shall obtain what we ask, which gives the Measure to the *Efficacy* of our Prayer; the Reason of which is clearly shewn at the End of my
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little Treatise *Of Devotion*. Nor let us be discourag'd when we are not immediately heard. The Blessed St. Paul pray'd *thrice*, (as was said lately) and yet was deny'd. But then his falling short of obtaining his request, was occasion'd by this, that God saw there was *more need*, and so it was a greater spiritual good to him to keep him *humble*, lest (as himself says) *the greatness of his Revelations should extol him*, than it was not to be vexed for some time with a Temptation for which Grace was too strong. Wherefore, when we Petition the Throne of Grace for any *Virtue* for our *selves*, we always receive either the *very* Virtue we pray for, or else some other spiritual Gift which is at that Season *more Proper*, and *more Necessary* for us: But of this Point, God willing, more hereafter.

12. Another General Method to overcome our Weakness, and not to yield to these frequent and customary Temptations, is, that, when we examine our Conscience in order to Confession, we be careful to accuse our selves, in the first Place, of those Interi-
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our bad *Dispositions*, to which our Original Corruption does particularly incline us; which every Man may easily find in himself, by reflecting on the *Effects* they produce. The usual way of Confessing is to say [*I accuse myself I have done, or said, this, or that.*] But certainly it were the most *effectual*, and most *Compendious* way to accuse our selves in the *first* Place of our *habitual Propensions*, and thence descend to our particular *Actual Failings* in our Exercizing this, or that Virtue; this being the laying the *Axe* to the *Root* of Sin; which once stubb'd up, the *branches* of it, those *particular Irregular Actions*, will of course *wither* and *decay*; and, on the other side, tho' we lop off never so many of those *branches*, if we let the *Root* remain, they will most surely grow again; and those spiritual *Maladies* of our Souls will never be *perfectly heal'd*, but only the Cure of them *palliated*. We must either cleanse the *Sink*, or the *Streams* will never run clear. 'Tis therefore those *inward* Bad Dispositions at which we must chiefly level all our Acts of

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Contrition, and Self-accusation. Indeed this Task is more Laborious, and more Mortifying to our Corrupt Nature; but then, the benefit, which will thence accrue to our Soul, is Inestimable, and will richly Countervail our Pains. Nor is it so hard to compass this, as those may imagine that consider not that our Heavenly Father is the *only Giver* of Grace to accomplish it; whose Goodness has promised us, that if we *seek* his Assistance, we shall *find it*, and if we *knock* at the Door of his rich Treasury of Grace, it will be *opened* to us. It savours oft-times strong of some secret *Self-Reliance* to alledge that this thing or the other is *hard*. If we look on our selves only, I know nothing that's *Good*, which is *Easy*; if on *God* only, I know nothing that is *hard*; for what can be *hard* for *God* to do? Let us imitate the Courage of *St. Paul*, and confidently, tho' humbly, brag in his words, *Omnia possum in Deo, qui me confortat*, *I can do all things in GOD that strengthens me*. Let us apply heartily to him, and we shall find that (as the Holy Baptist foretold of the most effectual

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fectual Means to Virtue in the *Law of Grace*) the most *crooked wayes* will be made *straight*, and the most *Rough* and *Difficult* ways will be made *Plain* and *Easie*.

DISCOURSE VI.

Of other Means how to overcome Venial Transgressions, which weaken our Good Intentions.

I. **A** Farther General Method how to prevent and overcome those quotidian Failings now spoken of, is that excellent Christian Duty of *Vigilance*, which keeps our Soul *awake* as to those good purposes which she made in the presence of God, while she was at her prayers in the Morning. Our Blessed Saviour bids us *Watch and pray, that we enter not into Temptation*: All his Heavenly words are to be understood spiritually. If the strongest Army does not make use of *wakeful Sentinels*

inels, it lies expos'd to the Stratagems of the Enemy; nor can we in our *Spiritual Warfare* hope to escape the being surprized, if we keep not a Careful *Attention* to our Thoughts, Words, and Actions. The exceeding Usefulness of this Duty of *Vigilance* will evidently appear, if we do but reflect that we should have found *no difficulty*, taking our Soul in the *same* temper in which she was while at her Prayer, when she made those good Resolutions, to have *resisted* manfully the *worst* of Temptations, nor to have been *aware* of the *least* of them; our best *Christian Thoughts* having at that blessed Season *Heaven* in their Eye, were so present to our Mind, and thence *G O D's* powerful Grace did, at *that* time, so strengthen and assist us, that there was no danger our Ghostly Enemy should, in that circumstance, do us any harm, but rather he stood *aloof*, and was *afraid* of us: But, when we quitted that happy Circumstance of our parlying with *Heaven*, and fell to converse with the *World*, which is bestrowed with *Snares*, we came in danger to be

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be quickly *entangled*. Our good Intentions which were before very *Brisk* and *Lively*, tho' they be not altered and changed substantially, or *in the Main*, by the Deliberate admittance of *contrary* ones; yet that *Attentiveness* being lost, they become *Languid* and weakned as to our Executing them. Now, the way to avoid this Necessary and Common Inconveniency that happens thro' our employing our Thoughts in *Temporal* Affairs, which hazards to taint our Soul to *some Degree*, is to keep alwaies in our Memory the *same* Affections, Intentions and Resolutions which we had *while in prayer*; which if we can compass, we shall remain *continually* afterwards the *same* we were *then*. Those thoughts we had, at that time, *actually*, will moreover, by this means, after some time, grow *Habitual*; and so *confirm* our Souls in Virtue, that all the invenom'd Darts of our Enemy will rebound upon himself, while levell'd at so impenetrable a Bulwark.

2. Here then it is (I say) that Christian Vigilance is to exert it self: This is its proper Task, and there are *many* wayes,

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ways, which every one's Circumstances will suggest to him, *how* it may be most profitably exerciz'd; viz. either by giving a *Reflecting Glance* over our former *Intentions* every hour we hear the Clock strike, or when we pass from one business, or from one Company or Conversation to another, or such like. It would be much better, if at the same time we should repeat mentally some Pious Sentence (of which King David's Psalms are full) suitable to the particular occasion: such as are, *Turn away mine Eyes, O Lord, that I behold (or regard) not Vanity. I have set God always before my sight, he is on my Right hand that I be not moved. Strike my Flesh with my Holy Fear, for I have trembled at thy Judgements. My Eyes are always upon our Lord, and he will pluck my Feet out of the Snare, &c.* Or, if the Temptation be violent, then stir up your Christian Courage, and fright it away with this powerful Charm, *Let God arise, let his Enemies be scatter'd, and let them that hate him fly before him.* Especially (as was said above) let us be sure to make use of such Thoughts, Sentences,

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tences, or Motives which we have experienced did most affect us formerly: For, every Soul has a *Different Complexion* of Thoughts, and (as it were) a *Temperature* of Spirit peculiar to her own Individual Self. Whence such Holy Sentences being suitable to her former Thoughts, and so proper for every occasion, cannot fail to move her better, and with *less* labour, and make her Victory both more *Secure*, and more *Easy*.

3. But, the very best way to arm our selves against all Temptations whatever, and quite overcome them, is to get into our Souls a hearty *Love* of GOD, whence will necessarily ensue a dear *Love* of our Neighbour for his sake. This Queen of Virtues is the proper Gift of the *Holy Ghost*, our Comforter, or Strengtheners; whence it is most peculiarly *that* which, above all others, gives us *Courage* and *Vigour* to subdue all our Ghostly Enemies. I doubt not, but, as the World goes, many will fancy that this Virtue of *Divine Love* is strangely *difficult* to be obtain'd; and that, tho' they have it, they can never know

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know *whether* they have it or not ; for which misconceits, I must declare that I am very sorry, and can only say, I will do my best to rectifie them. Indeed, if we had no better means to compass this Excellent Virtue, but our own groveling Thoughts that press us down to this Earth of ours, which furnishes us only with Fancies taken from Corporeal Objects, clogging our Affection from soaring to Heaven ; in *that* case, their Fear might be well grounded. But what have we *Faith* for? Or why was the *Supernatural* Doctrine of Christianity *reveal'd* to us? If we will *hide* this Talent in a Napkin, and *neglect* to traffick with it ; if we will suffer it to lie *idle* in our Understanding Power like a *dry Speculation*, and never endeavour to make it *affect* our *Will*, or reduce it to *practice* ; it will be impossible any Man living should advance to this Divine Love *at all* : But, if we endeavour by due Consideration to *lay to heart* the Truths it *assures* us of, nothing can be more *facil* than it is for the Doctrine of *Faith* to enkindle in our Souls some sparks of that Heavenly

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Fire which rain'd down at *Pentecost*.
 Let us see then what *Faith* teaches us,
 and what *Common Reason*, subservient
 to *Faith*, has ascertain'd us of; and
 then examin, if we will allow them to
 weigh in our consideration, (which I am
 to suppose those *well-meaning* Christi-
 ans, to whom I here speak, are willing
 to do) whether it be such a difficult
 matter to attain *true Charity*, or *Love*
 of God above all things, as some humble
 and timorous Christians imagin.

4. *Faith* tells all true Believers, that
 there is a *First Being*, or a *G O D*, and
 that all other things whatever, our *selves*
 among the rest, had their Being from
 him; and *Reason* convinces all those
 who are even moderately Learned, and
 are willing to hearken to it, that had
 we had our Being from *our selves*, or
 from *our own Nature*, we could never
 not have been, or never wanted Being,
 nor ever be *devested* of it, since it is
 self-evident our Nature *cannot but be it*
self. If then we had our Being, and
 consequently *all we are*, or *have* from
 God; does not Common Sense tell us,
 that we owe it all in Gratitude to him who

gave, or rather *lent* it us, and that we ought to employ it as he has ordered us; that is, to keep his Divine Precepts, the Chief of which is the Law of *Charity*, or an Entire and hearty Love of him above all things? Is it so difficult a matter to be *Grateful*? Or is it so hard to love so Gracious a Creatour, and so Generous a Benefactour who has freely bestow'd upon us *all we have*, and (as the same Faith teaches us) stands ready to give us Infinitely more, (that is even Himself) if we be not thus Ungrateful for what we have received from him already? Is Gratitude, I say, so unreasonable a Return to those that have done us good, that it *overstrains* our strength to put it in practice? Or rather, is not *Ingratitude* (especially such an Enormous One) held by all Mankind so black a Vice, that he who is Guilty of it deserves to be hated as a Monitor of Wickedness? *Ingratum si dixeris* (says the Proverb) *omnia dixeris*; If you name an Ungrateful Man, you have nam'd a Man guilty of all Vices in one. Even our self-love cannot but incline us to love those heartily who are our

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Greatest Benefactors, and whom we know to be still dispos'd to do us all the favours imaginable for the future, which we are capable to receive. 'Tis manifest then, that the *Love* of God is so *Ease* a Virtue, that 'tis *hard* to Humane Nature to avoid it, if we do but endeavour to make our Faith *lively*, by considering and duly reflecting on those most *Sure Truths* it proposes: and, if we do not this, nor ever *think* of, or lay to heart these Obligations, to what end have we any *Faith at all*; which was intended to work our Wills up to *Charity*, and not meerly to tell us a Company of *fine* or *admirable* Stories to please our *Fancy*, or amuze our *Understanding*.

5. But then, if we do, moreover, consider all the goods which have accr'd to our Being, in which consists our *Well-Being*, viz. Health, Wealth, Friends, and dear Relations, Beauty, Reputation, &c. all which are Gifts of the same Great Governour of the World, and so many *especial* Marks and Tokens of his *particular* Kindness and Goodness to our Individual Selves;

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and, (as is demonstrated, *Trans-Natural Philosophy* from Page 130, to p. 135; and more particularly, p. 338, 340, 341.) which were laid, order'd, and continu'd by a long *Series* and *Chain* of Causes as antient as the *World's Original*, for our Benefit, Comfort, and Advantage while we Sojourn here; Certainly, unless we are so wretchedly Selfish and enamour'd of our *Selves*, as to think it *due to us* that all the *World* should be made *for us*, or fram'd for our Satisfaction and Benefit, we cannot but look upon all these as the *Free Gift* of the *World's Great Governour*, and most humbly thank, and most dearly love that Sovereign Benefactor of ours who has so carefully and so abundantly provided for our Comfortable Subsistence even in this *Life*. What a strange corruption of Reason is it then so ravenously to catch at, and passionately, and finally dote on those Temporal Blessings, and yet to make so little use of our *Faith*, or *Reason* either, as not at all to regard, or look beyond them, on the Liberal happiness that reaches them to us; nor to consider

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that the *Divine Giver* is infinitely more be lov'd than his *Gifts*, that we are so over-fond of as to *undervalue* him for their Sake.

6. But, if, moreover, we do but consider those other *Great Truths* of our *Faith*, which we so flubberingly repeat and run over when we say our *Credo*, by which we are inform'd of the *incomparable Love* of our Heavenly Father to poor forlorn Mankind, in sending his Blessed Son, God Corqual to himself, to be made Man, dwell here amongst us, and teach us his Heavenly Doctrine, to fit and dispose us for Eternal Happiness, and all the most Effectual Methods that conduce to that End; such as are his being conceived Supernaturally by the Holy Ghost; born of a most pure Virgin; his exciting us to Virtue by his Holy Example; his suffering Persecution from wicked Men, for us, and them too, if their Obstinate Malice would have permitted them to have believed and followed the Way he had taught us to Salvation; and for the *same End*, and the *same Good Cause* his being apprehended, buffeted,

revil'd, mock'd, crown'd with Thorns,
 cruelly Scourged, his blessed Hands and
 Feet mercilessly bor'd to make way for
 the rough Nails which were to fix him
 to his Cross; and, lastly, his suffering
 a most ignominious and torturing
 Death on the Cross, ~~for our~~ *for our* Sins, to
 redeem us from the Thralldom of Sa-
 tan, which would otherwise have
 plung'd us in Hell for all Eternity. If we
 consider all these particulars, and that
 he *did*, and *suffered* all this meerly to
 court us to *love* him, because he saw
 that an affectionate and Hearty *Love* of
 God, was the only means to dispose us
 to *enjoy* him hereafter, and so make us
Eternally Happy: If, I say, we consi-
 der, and lay together all these most as-
 tonishing Marks of his *Love to us*; can
 any Soul, that has not renounced all
good Nature, be so Flinty, and so
 wickedly *Ungrateful*, as not to love a-
 bove all Worldly things, his Conde-
 scending, Suffering, and most Endear-
 ing God? Or, is his laying down vo-
 luntarily his most precious *Life* for his
 Creatures so little to be valu'd, as to
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empty Created Good *before him*; or even to allow them *any share* in our Love, so as to prejudice, in the least, the *Entire Affection* due by so many Titles to *him only*?

7. We may add to these most pregnant and most moving considerations those Numerous *Attributes* which K. David, and other Devout Persons, do in a most affectionate manner usually ascribe to God, importing the manifold *Relations* that pass between him and us; such as are, O GOD my Strength, my Fortress, my Refuge, my Deliverer, my Patience, my Hope, my Mercy, my Illumination, my Salvation, my Redeemer, my Comfort, my Maker, my Joy, my Happiness, &c. Which, if we consider, & but take that easie Pains to understand the Meaning of the Words which signify them, we must needs acknowledge that they do all of them import our *Dependency* on God, and his Love to us in one regard or other; and, consequently, do lay upon us so many Obligations to love him with our *whole hearts*. Indeed, if Cold and Careless Livers do never think of any of these, or pass

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them over with a *slighting disregard*, as if they look'd on *themselves* as *I-dependent* on him, and *se's sufficient*; then 'tis no wonder they make no Impressions of Love upon such stony hearts; but it is hardly possible that *well-meaning* and *devot* Souls, who are us'd to read such expressions, and are disposed to *attend* to what they read, with an Eye directed to do their duties accordingly, should not be *affected* with them, and *heartily Love* so Gracious a Benefactor from whom they receive so many Continual, and the Best Obligations. And, let me tell those Inconsiderate Wretches who believe all this, and that the same Goodness stands ready still to bestow on them *These*, and *far greater Favours*, if they would be *heartily willing* and *desirous* to dispose themselves to receive them, that the disrespectful Neglecting to return him a Grateful reciprocal *Love* for them, is enough to plunge their Souls for ever in the deepest Hell. Lesser Punishment is too little, in the Impartial Ballance of Justice, for the affronting by such a gross Contempt, the *Goodness* of an *Infinite Majesty*.

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8. Seeing then it is *not hard* to bring our selves to a sincere acknowledgment that all we *have*, or *are*, is given us by God; it cannot breed any *difficulty* to an honest grateful heart to render back to GOD what he has so freely Given us; especially, if we do but consider that we have nothing of our selves to present him with, but only what by *many* Titles was *his own* before. Let us then, when when such good Thoughts are *present*, and *fresh*, and *lively* in our Minds, make a hearty and cheerful *Sacrifice* to GOD, *once for ever*, with a full Resolution never to *retract* it, of all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions, nay, of all our *Temporal* Concerns too; humbly beseeching him graciously to *accept* of so unworthy a Present; and that he would please to *perfect*, *purifie*, and *dispose* of them all in such a manner, as may be most for his Honour and Glory, and most Effectual for our own Salvation. Such an Act as *this*, being an *Irrevocable Deed of Gift*, if it be made affectionately, cordially and sincerely, and with a firm Resolution never to make use of any of these in op-

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position to his Divine Will, has in itself the Virtue and Force of a *Habit*; and imprints a kind of not-easily-delible *Character* in the Soul; *sealing* it, as it were, for God's true and faithful Servant. 'Tis in a manner, equivalent to that Incomparable Disposition of St Paul, when he said (Gal. 2. v. 20.) *Vivo autem, sed non ego, vivit vero in me Christus. I live now, yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me.* It makes the Soul cling with a *closer* and more *intimate* Union to her dear God, and frees her from too much love to her self, the World, and all Created Goods. It cuts off at one blow (especially if frequently and devoutly repeated) all *Affections* to venial Sins; and delivers us from the Vexation and Importunity of our Passions. Lastly, since we are treating here of *Good Intentions*, this is the very *best* of them, fixing and rivetting our hearts to the Divine Will with an Adamantin Nail; it abates the force of those *Common* Temptations, which are used to assault us at unwarres; and so guards and establishesthe Superior part of the Soul, that they have

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no power to *sink* into the *Will*, however they may *swim* and *hover* superficially on the *Inferiour* part, or the *Fancy*. As for our *Primary Intention*, Temptations dare scarce approach it *thus fortify'd*, nor even look it in the Face; or, if they should assault it (as the Devil had the foolish Impudence to tempt even our Saviour himself) nothing can make our Victory easier than to *revive* and *repeat* such Intentions. Being laid up in *Apice Mentis*, in the *top*, or *highest Region* of the Soul, they are rais'd to a kind of *Vicinity*, or *Neighbourhood* with Heaven. The Batteries of our Ghostly Enemy are planted *too low* to shake such an Impregnable Tower thus guarded with Grace; at least all Hell can never *shatter* or undermine it; especially, if Christian *Vigilance*, our faithful Spiritual *Sentinel*, does but keep us *on our Guard*, and call on us to betake ourselves to our *spiritual Arms*, the best of which is to *renew* this Intention lately spoken of.

9. As I do not much *press* the Exercise spoken of *Seck. 8.* upon *all* my Readers, so neither will I *discourage* any

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ny who aims at *Perfection*, to use it, tho' it may seem rather to become a *high Contemplative* than those who live in the World, and by their Circumstances are forced to converse with it; such as are the Persons I intended to speak to in this Treatise, Only I would have none scrupulous, if they take *more Common* Methods, and neglect those which tend to higher states of *Perfection*. *Counsels* do not oblige as *Precepts* do; yet, 'tis my *advice* that every one who judges himself *capable*, should make use of it. To endeavour to imitate the Highest Saints in Christian Virtues, will *raise* their Souls higher, tho' they never *reach* their pitch. He that shoots at the Mid-day Sun, tho' he never hits the Mark, will be sure to *shoot higher* than he who aims only at a *Bush*; and he that does not often strive to do his *Best*, shall more often *fall short* of doing what is even *moderately Good*.

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DISCOURSE VII.

How to make our Good Intentions.

1. FROM the Principles laid in our former Discourses, and the whole Tenour of them all along, it may appear very evidently, that the proper way to beget in us Good Intentions, is to let them spring out of our *Christian Tenets*. Faith tells us Heaven is our *Chief Good*, and *only Happiness*; and that, if we fall short of this our true Last End, we must necessarily be *Eternally Miserable*. It assures us, withal, that this Unconceivable Joy, and Endles state of Bliss is *Attainable* by us, if we use our endeavours; and, consequently, that it is not only an Inestimable Good in it self, nay, as great as the Enjoyment of God himself, who is Infinitely Glorious, and most ravishingly

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ingly Amiable; but that it is also *Our Good*, for the pursuit of which we were made and placed in this World. Moreover, Reason, (especially if elevated by Faith) joins its Testimony to abet and confirm those Sacred Truths; and even *Death* it self, which we cannot but foresee will and must come, does convince us clearly how Empty and Fading are all the Goods and Contentments which the *World* can afford us; and, consequently, how highly it concerns us to place our Chief Affections on such *Durable* and *Eternal* Goods, as will both *satisfie* our *Boundless* Will, and *fill* the whole Capacity of our *Wishes*. These most Evident and most Undeniable Truths being *laid to heart* with such a care as things of the highest Importance require in any other weighty affair, will connaturally make us *Intend* to compass this Great Good, so superexcellent and only Desirable in *it self*, so Beatifying to us, and so Attainable by us; especially when, to comfort our Hopes of gaining it, Faith does also give and ascertain to us all the *Methods* *how* to attain it; and History

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also assures us there are Innumerable Passengers who, by travelling daily and constantly towards that Celestial Country, have left such manifest *Tracks* behind them, as have made the *Way* thither a *beaten Road*; above all, that *Way* being so Easy that there needs no more labour to get it, but only to *love it as it deserves*. Whence there will follow a *Will* to *suffer* (perhaps) some troubles for a *Moment* of time, and to *lose* some inconsiderable *Trash*, rather than forego it.

2. These are the Proper and Genuine Causes of our making *Good Intentions*; which are indeed built on such Plain and Common Principles that Nature instills and inculcates them even into the Rudest Understandings; viz. that [Every thing is to be *loved* and *valued* accordingly as it *deserves*; that, what's *Infinitely more* our Good, ought to be prefer'd before that which is *Infinitely less such*: and that, 'tis the greatest Folly and Madness not to forego *smaller Goods*. which we *cannot keep*, that we may possess our selves of *Incomparably Greater* ones which we *cannot lose*.]

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These Truths the clearest Verdict of Nature teaches us, and therefore those who do not follow these in their *practice* are left utterly *Inexcusable*; being *convicted* to be wilful Deserters and Renouncers either of their *Christian Faith*, or their *Common Natural Reason*, or rather, indeed, of *both*.

3. To make this more plain, and gain a clear Light whence our *Intentions* ought to *Issue*, we will manifest what we said above by a Parallel Instance. A Merchant, whose Trade it is to traffick for *gain*, is certainly inform'd of a Mine of Gold in such a Place: he is *assur'd* 'tis in his power to *compass* it, if he will endeavour it; nay, he is shown the *Way* to get it, and (as we will suppose) is *poor*, and knows he is utterly *undone*, if he does not obtain it. Is it possible that this Man will not heartily *love* such a beneficial purchase which will maintain him *for ever*? Or, is it possible that, *loving* such an Attainable Acquisition, he should not *Intend* to get it, and thence fall to *use Means* to gain it? Or, to use our B. Saviour's Parable, if a Man *finds a Treasure in a Field*, will

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he net go present'y and sell (or forego) a^t he has, and buy that Field. Now he could not go about this purchase, but he must necessarily first *Intend* do it; for all *Execution* of any thing is but a *Sequel* of the *Intention*; nor could his doing it be a *Humane Action*, unless it sprung from the *Intention* he had to get the Good he lov'd & aim'd at. Wherefore, it is only the *Propisal* of a *Great Good*, (*viz. Heaven*) which is held to be *Agreeable* to us, *Attainable*, and *Necessary* for us, that does connaturally cause our *Intention* to get it.

4. Whence follows that nothing can lie more *cross* to the whole Grain of Humane Nature, or be more *Aukward* and *Unnatural* than to *set* our *Intention* *voluntarily* and *arbitrarily*, as Men use to set their *Watches* with their Finger to what Hour they please. Which, therefore, is a most certain Argument of some *Byass* warping us from the right Methods of *Nature*, and of *Grace* which works with our Right Nature; and shews there is some Mixture of a *Temporary* Motive joyn'd with it; which, if it guides our *Intention*, or enters in-
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to it, will certainly *deprave* it either *wholly*, or to a *great Degree*. What need can there be of such *Crooked Intentions* of our own, when the Principles of Faith and of Reason too, do afford such pregnant and most effectual Motives to oblige us to aim at our own Happiness; and the ten Commandments are a *sure Rule* directing us how we ought to pursue it? Again, since the *Intention* always regards the *End*, this *Arbitrary* directing the *Intention* may hap to perswade People to do any *unlawful* action; flattering themselves, in the mean time, that they *Intend* a *Good End*; which is the same as to do evil, that good may come; a Position most opposit to, and forbidden by the Evangelical Law, or our Blessed Saviour's Doctrine. For we are to observe that tho' our *Intention* be properly of the *End*, that is (in our case) of *Heaven*; yet it superintends over, and *directs* all the Subsequent Acts of *Consulting* and *Choosing* the *Means*; and, if those *Means* to do some Good be *Unlawful*, the *Intention* was naught. For who sees not how absurd and Incoherent

herent it is to think to *please* God by *disobeying* Him; which they must needs do who think it lawful to violate any Commandment under pretence of *Intending* a good End; which is the same in effect as to *offend* God for God's sake, or to *hope* to be *saved* by taking the way to be *damm'd*. The same Divine Master who has taught us what is our true *last End*, has also given us Certain Rules to judge and know by *what Means* we are to *pursue* it; and both the later of these Doctrines, and the former are *equally Holy*, as having both of them the *same* most Holy and Divine Author.

5. To proceed; 'tis to be noted that it is not (as was said formerly) required of us, to be still making *Actual* Intentions in *every* good Action we perform, unless perhaps when we *resist Temptations*; each of those Acts of *resistance* including a *Renewing* our former Resolutions; in other cases, a *Virtual* Intention is generally sufficient. To understand this, we are to reflect, that *no Act* (as was said before) can be *blotted out* of the Soul, but by a *Contrary*.

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trary Act, nor consequently any *Intention* (*Light and Darkneſs, Chriſt and Belial* being Inconſiſtent) but by a *contrary Intention*; that is, by ſuch a one as *retracts* the former: Nor, indeed, can any thing whatever be *altered or changed*, but by putting a *new Cause*; and that too ſuch a one as is *able* to produce the Effect: But, eſpecially, when the Spiritual Act is ſuch, that it is not ſome ſlight or Wavering *Velleity*, or *hankering* after ſome *End*, to ſatiſſie the half-indifferent humour we are in at preſent; but it is a hearty Addi-
tion of our Soul *once for all*, to embrace and fix upon the Chiefeſt Good as our *Laſt End*, or Final Happineſs; ſuch as *Good Intentions* are, and always ought to be, ſince they cannot otherwiſe be juſtly called *Good*. It is then, abſolutely ſpeaking, enough to make our Intention in the Morning when we are at prayer, by offering up to *GOD* all our Thoughts, Words and Actions of the Day following (which I take to be the Duty of every Pious Chriſtian who aims at the perfecting his Soul) in ſuch a-manner as to reſolve, thro' *God's*
Grace,

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Grace, not to admit voluntarily and deliberately any thing which is *Opposite* to Christ's Holy Law. This *Intention*, I say, is *generally* enough: For, this done, our Soul will probably in all her Actions done that Day, retain the *taste* of that well-seasoned *Breakfast*: Nor will every *Surprize* that prevents our Vigilance, and makes us fall into some Imperfection in the Day time, *pervert* or *alter* our *Intention*, perhaps not so much as *shock* it in the least; as we may discern by the *Regret* we immediately feel upon our Consciences when we have behav'd our selves weakly: Which check, springing from our former *Good Intentions*, is a certain sign that it *retains* still its former Vigour; and that by playing this after Game, or rallying its forces afresh, it still remains Sound, Strong and Victorious. Let it be remember'd, that our Morning Resolutions made in Prayer, were the most *firm* and *solid* that can be imagined; they being built in our Soul on Christian Principles, which are *fixt* in its *Superiour* part so immoveably that they are beyond the Attacque of *Whiffling*

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fling and *Fleeting* Fancies to shake them. Let us reflect also that they were the *Result* of our most *serious* and most *deliberate* Thoughts; which gives them to be *better grounded* than to be shaken by every ordinary and trivial Blast of occurring Circumstances which set upon us at unawares. Nay, which is more, a good well-meaning Soul will *gain* by the Bargain, and in likelihood grow *stronger* by such a kind of Opposition. For it *humbles* her, that is, it makes her *stronger* by seeing her own weakness; and the oftter she falls into the *same* Imperfection, the *more* Humility still she gains: whence ensues a more perfect Reliance on God, and a hearty acknowledgment that he is her *only Strength*, which is the proper Disposition for the acquiring a *greater* proportion of his Heavenly Grace. Besides, it excites her *Vigilance*, by thus experiencing the watchful and restless Malice of our Ghostly Enemy. Moreover, it puts her, when she is come to herself, upon *renewing* her Holy Intentions and Resolutions with *greater Vigour*: And, lastly, while we conti-

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due fighting and opposing the Devil, by thus *repairing* and *better strengtkening* what he had attempted to *pull down* or *disorder*, we set our Face *directly* towards Heaven, and strain our steps to attain it; which is the most certain way to gain *new Degrees* in Virtue; whereas the most perfect Saints, if they do not *thus*, but content themselves to *stand at a stay*, shall most certainly *lose Ground*, and go *backward*.

6. Let not then those well-meaning Souls whom God permits to fall very often, and to *struggle* (perhaps a very long time) with some such Venial Failing, be at all *disheartned*, or think that God has forgot them, or not heard, or regarded their Prayers; or that they never made *true Intentions* to avoid them. The ways of the Almighty are not like ours: His Methods in conducting Souls are as *various* as those Souls themselves are, which are Innumerable. The *more shame* they take to themselves for their continual and oft-repeated Lapses, the more Glory accrues to God, whose power is *perfected* in *weakness*. Let them fight on courageously,

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giously, and *still resist*. He is a weak Souldier who gives over the Combat because his Importunate Enemy, not able to *hurt*, or *wound* him *mortally*, falls to *scratch* or *pinch* him. They may take Comfort by our late discourse in reflecting on the manifold advantages they gain by their often tripping, for they still resolve to *persist*, and to look more warily to their steps afterwards. They will easily discover what great Mercies are coucht under God's permitting them often to stumble. Let them not apprehend the Divine Goodness is *deaf* to their Prayers, because he grants not their Requests in the *same* particular manner their short reach would needs *prescribe* him: It belongs to his Infinit Wisdom to fulfill their desires in a *better* manner than they were capable of imagining. To return to our former Discourse.

7. I say farther that, the *meaner* sort of Uncultivated well-meaning Souls, who seldom do reflect *at all*, may possibly go on a long time in their plain innocent simplicity, doing their Duties by a kind of Habitual Custome, be-

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cause they are according to God's Will, without *renewing* their Actual Intentions *at all*; as we may easily see by this Familiar Parallel. An honest Labourer who drudges all the Day in making a Hedge, or a Ditch, does *propose* to himself, or *intend* at Night (as was his bargain) to get a Shilling for his painful Day-labour. 'Tis manifest he works for his Shilling every Motion he makes all that Day, and has that Reward *virtually* in his View, without standing need of making new *Actual Intentions* to get it; nay, tho' he made it many days before, as it happens when they undertake Work (as they say) *by the Great*, there needs no other *Actual Intention* of earning his Salary than what was made perhaps a Month ago; so that all his *succeeding* Labourious Actions go on in virtue of *that* former one. Some inconsiderable Avocations and Distractions may possibly intervene; yet still he hopes firmly that, having an honest and just Master, and having perform'd his work faithfully *in the Main*, tho' perhaps there may be some small Imperfections in it, he shall

not fall short of his Wages, according to the bargain, tho' perhaps with some small *abatement* for what was done *imperfectly*. Oh, that all Good Christians would, without more ado, observe the same *plain* Method, to which their Principles do directly lead them! Heaven is propos'd to us as the *Reward* of all our *Labours* and *Sufferings* here, which we do all of us *hope* to obtain in the *Evening* of our Life, the Hour of Death. Let us then in the Morning, with a short glance of our Reflexion, consider that this Day is *lent* us, or *added* to our *Life*, to earn that blissful Reward; and thence let us *intend* and *resolve* do nothing on this Day which may hazard to make us fall short of the happy Recompence of our Endeavours; and, this done, let us honestly go on performing those Christian Duties which the State of our Life requires.

8. Let us not stand speculating about making *new* Actual Intentions, (of which there is not a tittle in either Old or New Testament) nor hover anxiously *Doubting* whether we have a Good

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Intention in every particular Action.

We made it *once for all* at first, and it cannot but *remain* till it be *retracted*.

Till then it *continues*, and will sanctify all our Actions of the whole Day, and even our honest and innocent Recreations. They are all of them subordinate to the Law of Christianity, and are parts of that order of Living virtuously which we had prescribed to our selves, and intended in the *Morning*. And, tho' some Circumstance occurs, that occasions our deviating to some *small* degree from that prefix'd Method, yet we may comfort our selves that that *Circumstance* was not *Us*, nor did that Failing spring from our *Predominant Intention*, which is the Test of all Humane Actions; for we shall find, if we look into our hearts, that the former Good Intention continues there still; and, that, as soon as we seriously *reject*, that is, when our Soul is perfectly awake to her Duty, that former Intention *exerts* it self, makes her condemn her Imperfection, *rectifies* her again, endeavours to *wipe off* the *blemish*, re-establishes her, and gives her *fresh Vigour*.

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gour to pursue that End, or that Duty to which the same Intention had addicted her. Whence we may justly hope, thro' God's Grace, that there is scarce any *Taint* of Sin remaining in a Soul overtaken with such *Surprizes*, but only meer *Frailty*, accompany'd with some Tang of our Original Corruption; which may, and ought to humble us, and make us see, (as it were) by experience, how *totaly* we depend every moment on the Divine Assistance; and that, had we been left to ourselves, and had it not pleased God to lay those Motives, Thoughts and Affections, which gave a check to any beginning Passion, in our minds *Antecedently*; the least Motion of that Passion which attempted to *byass* us *something* from his most Sacred and Pure Law might, having nothing to restrain it, have hurry'd us into the highest *Extravagances*; which might have drawn after it such a Train of *ill Consequences*, as would have utterly ruin'd us.

2. Yet, tho', to prevent endless Scruples, I contend here that *Virtual Intentions* may suffice to guide and sanctify

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tie our daily Actions, even when we are
 not aware we *have* them; yet I am far
 from blaming those who do even fre-
 quently make *Intentions Actually*, espe-
 cially in two cases. One is, when we
 make *resistance* against *Temptations*;
 for, then it is most profitable for us to
 have recourse to our former Good In-
 tentions, and to *renew* them; which is
 a *reproducing* the Act of Intention, or
 making it over again, and generally
 with an Addition of greater Vigour.
 The other is, when more elevated and
 abstracted Souls do strain every mo-
 ment after higher Perfection; for such
 Heaven-soaring Saints, do intend still
 to *out-do* their *former selves*; and, there-
 fore, are still making Actual Intenti-
 ons of a *farther* Progress in Prayer;
 and having undertaken that Heroick at-
 tempt of continually *flying* the Suggesti-
 ons of *Nature*, and following the Mo-
 tions of *Grace*, they stand in need of
 exerting perpetually their utmost *Es-*
forts, because the occasions of *Pursuit*
 and *Resistance* are ever pressing. But
 'tis not my Intention here to offer Rules
 to such sublime Contemplatives; but

only (as has been said) for the Generality of such *Pious* and well-meaning Souls as dwell in the *Middle Story*, between great *Saints* and great *Sinners*.

DISCOURSE VIII.

That Scrupulosity does in a great Measure weaken our Good Intentions.

1. **T**HOSE Christians who stand Candidates for Heaven, or aspire to Eternal Happiness; or, which is the same, who have *Good Intentions*, are (as was said above) of three sorts; some of them are of so very *Rude*, and *uncultivated* Understandings, that they are incapable of *Higher* Instructions. Some are of a fair pitch of Capacity; such as the Generality spoken of in the Close of the former Discourse. And, lastly, some, tho' but few, have raised themselves by frequent Meditation and Contemplation above the *Common* Le-

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of those of the second Rank, and aim at a *constant* & continual Conversation with Heaven. Of these, the First sort have very seldom any Scruples, because they do scarce ever make any Reflexions on their own *Interior*: but go forwards, honestly *Believing* as their Pastours *teach* them, and *Acting* as they *bid* them. And, the Last sort are Generally *above Scruples* as to their Christian Behaviour, as having got quite above the *Purgative* Way: tho' many of them are not exempt from needing the *advice* of their Spiritual Director how to resist Temptations, especially those that tend to *Spiritual* Sins; and how to be assur'd whether those *Extraordinary* Irradiations, they do now and then experience, are from *GOD*; and, lastly, how to *advance* in *High Prayer*: for which, as I conceive, a few Rules may suffice. 'Tis left then, that *Scruples* do in a manner only perplex those Souls which are of the *Middling* sort: for, these good People being anxious and solicitous to tread *right* in the Paths of true Virtue, and having but *half-Lights* how to
guide

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guide their Interiour, are, consequently, dispos'd to *rest it often* on their Actions; and on the other side, being perfect Strangers to the Nature of *Spiritual* things, are apt frequently to doubt whether they are *Morally Good*, or *Bad*, or whether themselves are *Sinners*, or *God's Servants*; and when they do *Good*, when *Ill*. They are apt to take a Conceit (especially if humble) that their Intentions are not *directed right*, and therefore that even their best Devotions do not advance them towards Heaven; but, that, being aim'd at a *wrong End*, they may, for ought they know, be *Sinful* and *Wicked*. Guiding themselves by Fancy, they cannot perceive that they *love God*, or do any thing purely for *his sake*; but only out of Vanity, Affectation, or meer Custome. These turmoyling thoughts give them much Dissatisfaction and *Dilquiet* of Mind, and *discourage* them from going forwards *heartily* and *cheerfully* in their Holy Exercises. But, which is the greatest mischief of all, these Misapprehensions enfeeble their *Hope*, and, by consequence,

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quence, their *Charity*, or *Love of God*. For, as he who thinks some *Good*, (tho' never so great in it self) *utterly Unattainable and Impossible*, cannot *at all* love it heartily, effectually *intend* it, or labour to get it; So he who judges the Attainment of it so cruelly *hard*, and absolutely *Uncertain*, that, let him do his *best*, he has but *small hopes* to compass it, can never in such a comfortless condition, *heartily affect*, or *Intend* it; seeing that (as far as he can discern) he cannot be satisfied, that, in the whole course of his former Life, he has *certainly* *advanc'd one step* towards it.

2. To free good Souls from this *disconsolate and perplex'd* condition; is my Chief Aim in most of my future Discourses; being well satisfied within my Conscience that there cannot be a greater *Charity* to such Persons. Whence I shall not be solicitous if any should blame me for advancing some *Uncommon Positions*, and taking a Road not beaten by the *Generality of Spiritual Directors*; hoping, upon good grounds, that my *Principles* will justify the *Truth* of what I shall deliver.

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3. Every one is aware that *vain* Suggestions tempt us to *Pride*; *Impure* Ones to *Unchastity*; *Malicious* and *Envious* ones, to *Uncharitableness*; and *Sceptical doubtings*, to *Infidelity*; and so of all the rest: But I have not observed that many do lay to heart, or consider how *Over-timorousness* & *Scrupulosity* do tempt us to wrong that excellent Theological Virtue call'd *Hope*: tho' it be the *only* Comfort of our Spiritual Life, the Anchor which keeps us from being wrackt when we are tost in the turbulent Waves of *Temptations*, and the most immediate Disposition to the best of Virtues, *Charity*, or *Love* of *God*. How many Treatises have been writ to magnifie *Faith* (as indeed it deserves) and to exhort us to *stand fast* in it; as also to preserve and advance us in *Charity*, and in all Moral Virtues. Yet how few have we seen that give *Divine Hope* the Elogiums and Commendations it deserves, or shew the wonderful Influence it has upon *Charity*, or how it comforts and encourages all our Spiritual Actions? Which, perhaps, is the main Reason why *Scrupulosity*

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loſity is grown ſo *faſhionable* among the Generality of devout People; nay, 'tis well if it be not held a *Virtue* by ſome, and the *moſt* *ſcrupulous* accounted the *greateſt* *Saints*; tho', all this while (if their *ſcrupuloſity* be Exceſſive) nothing but that blackeſt ſpiritual *Vice*, call'd *Deſpair*, is more *Oppoſit* to that Virtue of *Hope*, or ſcarcely any more wicked in it ſelf, and its Conſequences. Every Pious Penitent is ſorry for his faults, clears his Conſcience of them by confeſſing them, and humbly accuses himſelf of them; but who thinks of confeſſing his *ſcrupuloſity*, tho' never ſo Great and Enormous? None; and why, but becauſe it ſuits with their Humour, and therefore they will not be brought to think it a *Sin*. Let them not deceive themſelves; our Ghoſtly Enemy takes his advantage from *all* our *Paſſions*; and, as he makes uſe of our *Concupiſcence* to tempt us to *Uncleanneſs*; ſo he ſerves himſelf of our *Fear*, to deſtroy our *Hope*, and tempt us to Deſpondency in God's Goodneſs. He knows very well that 'tis againſt the grain of our Nature to *love* thoſe heartily,

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ly, who have no Disposition to do us Good; and that, therefore, if he can make us apprehend that our Infinitely-Good GOD is so Unreasonable, Humourfome, so Implacable and hard to please, that, let us do all we can, we know not how to win his favour (which are such Qualities as our Nature abhors) or, as the Scripture expresses it, so *harsh* and *austere* a Person, that he *expects fruit where he has not sown*, he knows (I say) that if this Misconceit once sink into us, (which is most *injurious* to GOD) it will in time make way for the Spirit of *Blasphemy*; and that, if he can make us believe our loving Lord and Father is more ill-natur'd and Unreasonable than the *worst* of his Creatures, it would be impossible we should *heartily love* him. Whence follows of course, that, since our Will must needs love *Something*, we shall fall to settle our Chief Affection on some *Creature*. By which Stratagem he will have accomplish'd his whole Design, and got the poor deluded Soul where he would wish to have it: that is, (*Hope and*

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Love being stifled in her) to be a perfect *Slave* to Sin and Hell; a Denizon of his black Kingdom; and, which is worse, by thus extinguishing her *Hope* and *Charity*, to secure his Tyrannous Dominion over her, and by degrees fix her in *Despair*.

4. In the mean time to *lull* those well-meaning Souls who are not yet so deeply engulft in the Sin of *Scrupulosity*, he transforms himself into an *Angel of Light*; he talks like a *Saint* to them, and inculcates how great a Virtue it is to *fear God*; and, therefore, the more they *fear* him, the more *Virtuous* they are: Nay, he will quote *Scripture* too for their farther assurance; for the Devil is a great *Scripturist*, nor can the acuteft *Socinian* bring Text upon Text more *nimbly*, or pervert them more *plausibly*, for his own purpose. He will lay open very amply what *Encomiums* are there given to the *Fear of God*; what *Blessings* are promist to those who *begin* with that *Fear*, and proceed with it all their Lives. But he plays the *Crafty Sophister* all the while. Not one of those Texts come up to abet
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an *Irrational* and *Scrupulous* fear of God in those who *mean* well, and *endeavour* to serve him : Much less can he bring any one that recommends to us a *Servile Fear* since the Law of Grace was promulgated to the World ; nor any other than an High *Reverential Fear*, which a *Humble* and *Loving Son* pays to an Almighty GOD, who is also his *Dear Father* ; for, by that nearly-Relative Name, our Saviour *CHRIST*, who taught us that Law, has commanded us to call him, and our *Heavenly Father* when ever we pray to him ; and surely the Divine Wisdom came not hither to teach us *Complements*. He is then really our *Father*, and *such* we ought to call him, and as *such* look upon him ever since his only Begotten Son made himself our *Brother* by taking our Nature upon him. Nay, even the most *wicked Christians*, when they once become *Penitent*, are not forbidden to address to him in the same words : For we may observe that the Prodigal Son, who had riotously spent all his Patrimony, used the same Appellation when he begg'd pardon of his *Father*, whom he

had

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had so highly offended, and found his Mercy ready to receive him with kindness. I say, the Devil himself, as quick as he is at quoting Scripture, cannot produce one *Line* there, that those *Christians* who *intend well*, ought to have any other Fear of **GOD** than that *Filial* one, which a *Son* bears to a dear *Father* of so Sovereign a Majesty; or any *such* Fear as in the least diminishes our *Hope* in his Goodness, or our *Love* of him, as a *Scrupulous Fear* does; much less *such* a Fear as tends Implicitly to *Blaspheme* his Infinite Goodness; in which extravagant Conceit consists the *Sin* of *Scrupulosity*. To apply this Discourse to the Point in hand; since no Man can at all *intend* to get, or pursue, what he has no *Hopes* to obtain; it follows that what *weakens* our *Hope*, must of force, in proportion, weaken our *Good Intentions* also; and, consequently, diminish the Goodness of all our Moral Actions and all our Virtues; which will make our Christian Life *Sickly, Languishing, and Faint*; which takes the Measure of its *Soundness*, and is adjusted to the *Vigour* of our *Intentions*.

5. But

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5. But the Devil can put on *more* shapes of an Angel of Light than *one*; Another Stratagem of his to enfeeble our *Hope*, is, to suggest to us a *Counterfeit Humility*. To understand which, we are to note, that tho' the Virtue of *Hope*, does chiefly, or rather wholly, rely on the *Divine Goodness* assisting us, without which we can do nothing, nor advance one step towards Heaven; yet there is requisite withal, some kind of Apprehension, or some good Opinion, of our own good *Actions* done thro' *GOD's* Grace, at least of our *Good Intentions* and *Endeavours* to serve *GOD*; otherwise 'tis impossible we should have any *Hope* in *GOD's* Goodness at all. St. Paul tells us, *That if our Conscience does not accuse us, we have Hope*; which is the same as if he had said, If our Conscience does accuse us in *every* Act we do, we can have no *Hope at all*. If then they come to conceit, as some Scrupulous People do, that they do *nothing* but Sin *continually*; can such Souls hope, or expect the Highest of Rewards, Heaven, from a *Just God* whose very Essence obliges him to *hate Sin*,
and

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and if (it be Unrepented of) to give it its due and proper Reward, Damnation? Can a profligate wretch who *drinks Iniquity like Water*, and wallows in all sorts of Villany and Wickedness, presume, that (while he remains such) he is an Object of *G O D*'s Love, and a Subject capable of a Crown of Eternal Glory? 'Tis the Method of the Divine Wisdom in the Administration of his World to plant good *Dispositions* first, and then (if Men be not wanting to themselves) to promote and carry them on to *farther perfections*. Plainest Natural Reason assures us of the same. Well may we hope for a Harvest when we know the Seed is sown, the Ground till'd, and the Blade begins to appear; but, if we think the Ground is stony, no Seed is sown, or else lies expos'd to the Inclemency of the Air on a hard Rock; what Harvest can we *Hope* for? Wherefore, if these Scrupulous Persons take a conceit they have no *good Dispositions* laid in their Soul already, they will hardly be drawn to *hope* for the *Harvest* of their Labours, Heaven; or for any Favours

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Favours from the Divine Goodness. Besides, every good Disposition we find in our selves, is a *special favour* of God, and by its lying cross to the Genius of corrupt Nature, 'tis easie to see it is *Supernatural*; Since then the Doctrine of Christianity assures us that Infinit Goodness stands ready to promote, ripen, (as it were) and the Crown his own Gifts; if we judge we have such good Dispositions in us, we have (from this head) just ground to *hope*; if we find *none* such, it is hard to *Hope at all*. Nay, for the same Reason, even a Sinner when he becomes Penitent has ground to *Hope*; as knowing that the turning his heart from Sinful Affections to a Resolution to follow Virtue is, *Mutatio dextra excelsi*, a Change wrought in his Soul by the hand of the most High; and he is but meanly instructed in Christianity who knows not that all the Doctrine of our dear Saviour, and all the Methods laid by him do tend to *heal* our Sores, *strengthen* our *weakness*, and *direct* aright our straggling and *disorderly* Steps. The Holy Baptist foretold his Merciful and

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Gracious Intentions for us in these Comfortable Words, *A bruised Reed shall be not break, and smoking Flax shall be not quench till he comes to Judgment.* Which understood Spiritually, as it ought, signifies that the whole Work of our Good Redeemer did tend to strengthen even the weakest Soul, and not to break it by Diffidence in his Goodness; and that, if there be but one spark of Charity left in our Hearts, to blow it up again, thro' our Hope in the same Goodness, into a Flame of Divine Love. All which Considerations end in this, that, unless we be conscious of having *Good Thoughts* and *Intentions*, and that we have done *some good Actions*; we can hardly entertain any Hope of Heaven, or that Divine Grace will ever assist us to obtain Eternal Happiness.

6. If then the Devil can but persuade Souls out of a Counterfeit Humility, to think they have no Goodness, or Grace at all in them, he will easily root, and perhaps in time quench their Hope, and consequently their Charity, or Love of GOD. What then (will
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such timorous Souls say) must we *prank* our selves in our own conceit, and *flatter* our selves we are Saints, when all the while we experience how *Lumpish*, *Dull*, and (as it were) *half unwilling* we are to perform good Actions, or even to say our Prayers. Does not this encline People to nourish *Spiritual Pride* in their hearts, which is a Sin next to plain Devilishness? Must we reject and bid farewell to that excellent Virtue of Humility, which we have always been taught is the only *Basis* and Foundation of all our Spiritual Building? I Answer, not one Jot. Was St. Paul *spiritually Proud* when he said Confidently, *Omnia possum in Deo qui me confortat; I can do all things GOD who strengthens me.* 'Tis Pride, indeed, to rely on our selves, but who did ever say it was Pride to rely on GOD, and on his Holy Grace in us, which St. Paul assures us is *Omnipotent*. Let us learn of the same Apostle in what true Humility consists; *Non sumus sufficientes, (says he) facere aliquod bonum ex nobis, tanquam ex nobis, &c. We are not sufficient to do any Good of our selves, as of our selves, but*

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all our Sufficiency is from God. Let us then humble our selves as low as our Original Nothing, when we regard our own Strength; but let us not belie the Efficacy of *Grace*, or wrong God's Goodness by denying we have those Gifts, or that Pitch of *Grace*, and those Virtues, which out of his meer Mercy, and the Merits of his Son our Saviour, he has evidently bestow'd upon us. How can we ever thank him for his Gifts, if we disacknowledge he has given us any? How can we bless and magnifie his Holy Name for our receiving such favours from him; if at the same time we disown the Receipt of them! Or how should we in Temptations, make use of our Interiour Good Dispositions, which are our *Spiritual Arms*, if we do not believe we have any such Arms to make use of? To overween and judge our selves better than we are, or to think, that, as of our selves, we can do any Good, is *Pride*: but, when we cannot but know by an easie Reflexion that the Divine Goodness has planted in our hearts *Good Intentions*, and that we endeavour (tho' with some Imperfection)

section) to execute them, and to pursue Virtue, and hate Vice; to think, in such a case, there is *nothing* that is *Good* in us, is pure *Folly*. 'Tis the same as if a modest Virgin should out of Humility, think and acknowledge her self *unchast*; or a *Charitable* Man think himself an *Usurer*. Do but *heartily own*, that all the Good you have, and the Continuance of it for every Moment, comes from God's Heavenly Grace; Do but acknowledge and keep awake in your Soul when you do any Good, that saying of St. Paul, *Non Ego sed Gratia Dei mecum*; Not I, but G O D's Grace with me: Or say heartily with Blessed St. Austin, *Merita nostra sunt Munerata tua*, Our Merits are thy Gifts: Do but, I say, this *sincerely*, and you have perform'd the exact duty of Christian Humility: But that, well-meaning good Christians should dejectedly stand fancying they do *no good at all*, even when God's Grace is making them *actually* to do it, is to *evacuate* God's Grace, and make it good for nothing.

7. But what shall be said to that *Unwieldiness* and *Lothness* to go about *Spiri-*

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Spiritual Actions, and particularly their *Prayers*, which breeds much of their *Scruple*? What I am to advise, is, that those *Duties* being *Spiritual* Actions, they will only judge and determine of them by their *Reflexion*, by which only any *Spiritual* thing can be known or discerned. Let them reflect then, whether they are *Troubled*, or *Pleased* with this *Backwardness*: If it *disturbs* them, then it is a clear *Demonstration* that 'tis *against* their *Will* and their *Intention*, and therefore is no *Sin*. Can any thing be more evident, than that we are always *pleased* when we *have* our *Will*; and therefore whatever *displeases* us is *against* our *Will*, and *Involuntary*. Again, did they *intend* this *Lothness* to pray, meditate, be devout at the *Sacraments*, &c. If they did *not intend* it, but are *disturbed* at it afterwards, and even when they have it, then 'tis *Manifestly* *against* their *Intention*; and therefore, if there be any *harm* in this seeming *Indevotion*, 'tis even from hence shown that their *Intention* is evidently *Good*, because it is *against*, or *Opposit* to this
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dull Slothfulness which we find in us which argues most evidently, that it proceeds from some odd *circumstance* or some *Natural*, or *Corporeal* Indisposition. Let them take Comfort then and know assuredly that God, who sees the *Heart*, and weighs the *Spirit*, judges of their Endeavours by what they internally, and sincerely will'd and intended; and not by the restiveness of their *Inferiour* part, or the *Fancy*, to comply and go along currently and smoothly with those *Spiritual* Acts. He is to be served in *Spirit* and *Truth*, and there is not one *Foot* of *Spirit*, nor of *Truth* either in this *Unactiveness* of our *Imagination*; which proceeds from our not having suitable *Species* or *Phantasms* at hand, to co-operate sensibly and readily with our *Spiritual* part; whence proceeds that *Dulness* which makes them seem *unwilling*. Lastly, let such good People know that they are in *Prayer* even when they are *Involuntarily* *Distracted*, or have a *Will* to pray; or (which is the same) do pray with their *Will*, even when (thro' their judging of *Spiritual* things by their *Feeling*, and

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not by the *Reflexion* of their Reason; they seem to be *unwilling*. But of this Point more at large in the next Discourse.

DISCOURSE IX.

*Of the Proper Means how to satisfy
Scrupulous Souls.*

1. **S**crupulosity being, generally, the *Greatest Fault* to which well-meaning Souls (especially those of the *devout Sex*) are most Obnoxious, and the *greatest weakner* of their Good Intentions; I judge it my duty, to be more large and particular in rectifying that troublesome, and *mischievous* Imperfection. Had I no other Motive to do this but only *that* lately mentioned, *viz.* that it enfeebles and prejudices their *Hope*, and consequently their *Love* of *Heaven*, I should think my self sufficiently oblig'd to do my utmost to cure Souls of such a pernicious Malady;

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but, I am sorry to say that there is another Reason which lays a plain *force* upon me to enlarge upon this Subject; which is, that it is now grown such a Common Custome amongst many to guide Souls by the Way of *Fear*, that it is almost come to be the *Fashion* and *Vogue*: whereas the Method of guiding them by that of *Love*, is proper and peculiar to Christians, who live under the *Law of Grace*, as the other was to the Jews who liv'd under the Law of *Moses*. These were, by the State of the World at that time, like *Servants*, or *Slaves*; whereas *we*, being now *Redeem'd*, or bought again, by the Merits of our dear Saviour, out of that Slavery of Sin, are by the same Goodness adopted to be *Sons*; whence we ought to bear the same regard to our *Heavenly Father*, as becomes so near and dear a Relation; that is, a *Dutiful* and most *Affectionate Love*; accompanied, indeed, with a profound *Reverential Fear* of Offending so Great a Majesty, whose *Holiness*, which is Essential to him, gives him an infinite *Hatred against Sin*; but yet, not with such a Fear as Guilty Slaves bear to an *Angry*

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Angry Master; but such a one as springs out of a deep Sense of the *Obedience* and *Love* we owe to so *Good a Father*, who has raised us from the *Abject Condition* of Slaves to the Devil, (which made us liable to a Hell of Misery) to the *Glorious Liberty of the Sons of God*, which entitles us to a *Heavenly Inheritance*, and to reign with him for ever. Oh, that Christians would but know their own Dignity, and consider of what *kind of Spirit* they are, or ought to be! Oh, that they would but seriously *weigh* and lay to heart, that *now* in the Law of *Grace*, they are really *Sons*, and make a full account that *God* is their *Father*! Did they well consider this, they would sincerely *love*, and, out of that *Love*, *serve* him; they would with a Plain and honest Simplicity do their *Endeavours*, & be humbly sorry for their performing them *Imperfectly*; which done, they would surcease all their *Fears* and *Scruples*, and rest confident of his *Fatherly Kindness* and tender *Mercy*.

2. Thus much in *Common*: To draw nearer towards the particular ways how to cure those *Panick Fears*

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and Scruples; it is most requisite (since the Persons I write to, are supposed to be of a Competent Pitch of Understanding) to give them some farther Light how to distinguish between the *Superiour* and *Inferiour* part of the Soul, which we have only *hinted* hitherto; without some competent Knowledge of which they cannot be able of themselves, nor enabled by others, to understand what's *Sin*, what *not*; the Ignorance of which cannot but *perplex* such solicitous well-meaning Christians with perpetual *Anxiety* and *Dissatisfaction*. I discourse thus.

3. Man being compounded of two *Different*, and (as has been shown *Disco.* Sect. 5.) *Opposit* Natures meeting in one *Person*, that is, of *Soul* and *Body*; and, as been Defin'd by the Church, and indeed known by Reason, and even almost by *Experience*, the *Soul* being that which gives the Material, or Corporeal Part its *Essence*, or makes it a *Humane Body* (which the Schools call to be the *Form* of it;) It follows evidently that there are some Operations in Man *peculiar* to the *Soul*, and incommunicable

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ble to a *Corporeal* Nature; but also some others which proceed from her as she *informs* the Body, and acts with it after its peculiar manner. It being manifest that, when the Soul is gone, the Compound not only ceases to *know* and *will*, which are the Operations proper to *Spirits*; but to *imagin* or *Fancy*, to use the *Senses*, *Motion*, or any other Function which belongs to all other Animals which are *meer Bodies*. Hence it is, that we call *that* Spiritual Faculty by which we *know* or *will*, the *Superiour* part of the Soul: because *Spiritual* Figures, and consequently their Functions and Operations, are of a *Superiour*, *Higher*, and *Nobler* kind of Being than *Bodies* are; and that *Power*, and its Functions and Operations, which belong to the Soul as she is meerly the *Form* of the *Body*, and are Common to *Brutes* as well as *Men*, the *Inferiour* Part of the Soul; that is indeed, (the Soul having no Parts) we frame a *lower* Conception of the Soul as she makes the Man exercise those *Ignobler* Acts, than we make of her as she is conceiv'd to enable him to perform the other which

are Nobler ones. The Operations of this Lower sort, are *Fancying*, or *Imagining*, coveting by the Material *Appetite*, *Hearing*, *Seeing*, and exercising the rest of the *Senses*; as also of *Moving*, *Growing*, or *Vegetation*; all which are found in Beasts. Of the *Higher* sort are *Knowing*, *Willing*, *Loving*, *Hating*, *Judging*, *Discouraging*, *Dubiting*, *Assenting*, *Suspending*, and such like; or, lastly, (speaking of the Soul as to her Morality) of *Intending*, *Deliberating*, *Electing*, &c. Again, in the *Superiour* part of the Soul are lodged our *Principles* (whether of Faith or Reason) which guide our Soul as she is speculatively *knowing*, or Practically *Intending*. 'Tis, moreover, from this Act of *Intending*, that the *Superiour* part of the Soul is call'd the *Mind*, or *Meaning* Power; because only a *Spirit* can *mean* or *Intend*. Lastly, (as has been shown) the *Intention* is the only *Source* and *Test* of all our Actions as they are *Morally* Good or Bad. Whence we do esteem a Man *Virtuous* or *Vicious*, according as he *Intends*, *Designs*, or *Aims* his chief Actions at his true *Sum-*

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rum Bonum, or *True Last End*, the obtaining which will render him *Hap- py*; or at some *Despicable*, *Unworthy* Object, which can never satisfy the boundless desire of his Soul tho' he had it ever, must at last forsake Him, or He it; and so leave him for ever most *Unhappy* and *Miserable*.

4. This Doctrine, tho' deliver'd in a short Summary, I dare vouch to be (as to every part of it) abetted by most *Undeniable Principles*; or such as are either clear of *themselves*, or may be *easily cleared*, even to a Moderate Under- standing. Ere I proceed, I must beg leave to refresh my Readers Me- mory, by repeating in short hints some few Truths, which I have either for- merly, or now lately delivered, and request he would bear them in mind. As first, that he would reflect well on the Nature of a *Body*, and a *Spirit*; and, consequently, between what's *Corporeal* and what's *Spiritual*. Second- ly, that he would keep firm in his Thoughts that the *Intention* of our *Last End* is the *Spring* of all our Humane Actions that are *Moral*, or as they re-

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spect *Virtue* and *Vice*. Thirdly, that an *Intention*, it being an Act of the *Superiour* part of the Soul, cannot be blot-
ted out but by a *Contrary Intention*. A *Spiritual* Being is not like that of *Bodies*, which are of their own Nature *Corrup-
tible*, and thence apt to *moulder* away; and, consequently, all that's in them *decays* and *perishes* with them. Either a new Choice of *Another Last End*, must displace or efface the *Former*, or it will stand for all Eternity. These Truths premised, let's apply 'em to particulars; and, by these Impartial Tests, determine what ground there is for those frequent and common *Scruples* which so dreadfully haunt and perplex the *Fancies* of many well-meaning Souls.

5. Some of them are much troubled that many Impertinent and Foolish Thoughts do frequently *distract* them in their prayers, and thence they mightily fear they do not *pray at all*; nay, perhaps, they fancy they commit *new Sins*, while they are praying against the *former* Ones. I ask then first, did they *Intend* these Distractions? If not, but the *contrary*, then those distracting Thoughts,

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Thoughts have no *Moral* Goodness or Badness in them, and therefore cannot possibly be *any* Sins at all. Moreover, if, when they went to pray, they had an *Intention* to pray so long, or while such Prayers lasted, then their former *Intention* to pray is still *continu'd*; and, so, they were in prayer, or had the *Superiour* part of their Soul elevated to God all the while, in despite of their *Involuntary* Distractions. Oh, but they will say, they were *negligent* to put them away, and that was a Sin. I ask again, Did they *Intend* that Negligence; that is, did they *see*, and were *aware*, that they let them go on, notwithstanding that their Christian Principles, and their Reason did admonish them they ought to *check* them, and return to *Actual* Prayer? If they did, they were so far faulty, and ought to amend it for the future; if not, then it was a meer *Involuntary* course of *Fancies* buzzing in their Brain (which was perhaps out of their power to help) excited either by the weather, the Motion of Humours in the Body, some former Sollicitous Thoughts, or some such casual odd

Circumstance, which *hinders* them from reflecting on the unmannerly Intrusion of Distractions at such a Season ; and, therefore, that apprehended *Negligence* was *no* Moral Action, nor in the least *sinful* : Indeed, care is to be taken, that they do not fall to their Prayers *abruptly*, without any kind of consideration *what* they are to say, but, satisfying themselves they have it in their Prayer-Book ; or, without regarding to *whom* they are going to speak ; such an *Irreverend Unpreparedness* in the beginning can have no better a Progress : Let them then *season* their Souls first with a due Reflexion *before whom* they stand, and to how *great* a Majesty, now *present*, and looking *down* on them as they look *up* to Him, they are going to address their Petitions ; and (if their Preparation be well chosen) the Motions of their *Mind* (the *Phantasms* which they are to use, being beforehand thus *summon'd* and *prest* to attend them) will better retain the Impression such an *August Presence* must needs make. Let them also consider that Prayer is the *most concerning Action* of our whole

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Christian Life, & *most efficacious* both to uphold and promote us in *Virtue*; and to obtain God's Grace, without which we cannot possibly think or do any thing that is Good; and then they will not judge we are to slubber it over, or go *slightly* or carelessly about it.

6. Again, Let them well examin themselves whether some *Undue* or too prevalent *Affection* for some *Created* Toy, is not the *Cause* of their Distractions: For, generally, when we are to raise our Thoughts and Affections to *Heaven*, that Creature which has too great an *Ascendent* over our heart, will appear *uppermost*, and *stop* us in our Way. But, in case our Distractions be *Indifferently* of any Object, or of many confusedly, and that a due care of *preparation* was taken, let not the Devout Soul trouble herself, nor break her brain to avoid what perhaps she cannot help. Let her strive to avail herself by *reading* in her Prayer-Book, and endeavour to *attend* to the *sense* of the words she finds there, which is the easiest way of procuring *Attention* in such

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such a case. If that do not remedy her Distractions, let her suffer patiently what she cannot amend, and slight them; for they are none of hers, but troublesome Guests that intrude against her Will. Let her by no means give over, but finish her *Intended Task*, as well as God will give her leave, without vexing her self she cannot bridle her skittish Fancy, and she will gain by her Distractions. Let her make account, God is trying her Constancy, whether she will be deturn'd from her Dutiful Application to him by every occurring difficulty. If such slight, tho' wearisome rubbs make her leave off her Devotions, 'tis a sign she affected *sweetness* (at least sought her own content) in prayer, and intended to please her *Nature* rather than to serve and please her God. Lastly, if I may be allow'd to repeat over again what cannot be too often inculcated, since she seriously *Intended* to pray as good Christians ought, let her be assur'd that the *Superiour* part of her Soul where her Intentions dwell above the reach of Fancy,

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to violate them, is *still in prayer*; tho', thro' the turmoyl of various phantasms, which wholly take up the *Inferiour* part, or the *Imagination*, she does not, nor can indeed, perceive it. Nothing can more clearly demonstrate that those *Distractions* are *against her Will*, and so, none of hers, than her own experience that she is *troubled* she *has* them, and that they *cross* the Intention she had when she set her self to pray, which Intention she had never *retracted*: For, (as was said above) had they been *according* to her Intention and Acts of her *Will*, she would not have been *troubled*, but *Glad* she had them: she would have kindly *caressed* and *cherish'd* them, and *rejoyce* she had got what she *wish'd* and *intended*.

7. Some other Devout Souls will needs fancy that they do nothing for God's *sake*, but either out of Vanity, Good Nature, or some other sinister Motive; and their Reason is, because they do not *feel* in themselves such a hearty Inclination or Intention to do their Actions, because they are
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pleasing to God, as good Christians ought. To those good People I answer, that they quite mistake the whole matter; and, that 'tis impossible we should (ordinarily) *feel* any thing, or any Act that is *Spiritual*. I have above prevented any such Expectations by shewing them clearly the difference between a *Body* and a *Spirit*, and that only Corporal things are capable of being *felt* by Experience; but *Spiritual* things are only to be known by making use of *Reasoning* and *Reflexion*, which are themselves *Spiritual Acts*. Indeed, some Souls may have so cultivated their Minds with such kinds of *Reflexion*, that they are grown *Familiar*, and *Habitual* to them, and *ever at hand*; and add a kind of *Liveliness* to the Obscurity of Faith, whence, having gain'd a kind of Experience, that they have such customary *Phantasms* in their Imagination, it *seems* to them that they *feel* the *Spiritual Act* it self which goes along with that Phantasm, and is, as it were, a *Sign* of it: which is the Reason why some Masters of Spirituality use to distinguish the ways of
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proceeding by *Faith*, and by *Feeling*; and, moreover, some high Contemplatives have, by a special Favour, a *super-natural* Perception of all that passes spiritually in their Soul. But I am not discoursing here of such illuminated persons; I am only speaking to such as walk on honestly and sincerely in the plain beaten Road of *Faith*; and yet cannot be satisfied whether ever they do *any Good* or *no*, and am endeavouring to rid them of that Comfortless Scruple.

8. Let's examin then, according to the Doctrine formerly deliver'd, what Information and Satisfaction the *Reflexion* of their *Reason* upon their *outward* Actions, (which cannot be unknown to them) gives in this case. When they Pray, give Alms, &c. they must necessarily do it for *some* Motive or *other*. I ask then, Do they observe that they do those good Actions for the *World's sake*? If so, they would often pretend to go to their Prayers, when they really *do not*: They would, when, for that pretended End, they retire into their Closet, lay aside their troublesome
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some and inklome Prayer-Book; and fall to read a Romance, or a History, or make use of their Needle, or apply themselves to some other more *welcome*, and more *diverting* Employment; for, if they did it for the *World's* sake, the World, not knowing what really pass, would *equally* esteem them Saints, as if they had indeed been all the while at their *Prayers*. The same Discourse serves for *Alms-deeds*: If they did them to gain the applause or good Opinion of the *World*, they would still endeavour, like the Pharisees, to bestow their Charities so as they might be *seen of Men*: nor would they give any in *Private*, where none could take notice of it; Or, at least, if they did, they would not find themselves well at ease, till in discourse they had taken occasion to *make it known* to the Company. Now, in case they do not find in themselves such Symptoms of a *Perverted Intention*, they ought to think their actions proceed from a *Good* one, and were the effects of their Christian *Principles*, and of *God's Grace* moving them effectually to put those Principles in Practice.

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9. Yet, still they have a Scruple that all those, and such like Actions were done out of meer *Custom*. Now, if by *Custom* they mean a *Habitual* Propension to perform such good Deeds often, let them take Comfort, and bless God for it: For a *Habit* to do Good, argues a *Firmness* in Virtue, and approaches to *Sanctity*, which is an *Establishment* in Virtuous Actions and Dispositions. But, if they mean that *Corrupt Nature* made them take a Toy to do such Actions *Customarily*, they may easily correct that Extravagant Conceit. For, most of our Christian Actions *lie cross* to the Grain of Corrupt Nature, and therefore are very unlikely to proceed from such an Origin. Indeed, this Scruple may seem to have most force in Alms-deeds; which many, of a compassionate and tender Nature, may happen to do, tho' they never heard of Heaven, or ever believed it. It is related by a Gentleman, so very intimate with *Hobbs* the Atheist, that he acquainted him with his execrable Tenets without disguise, how, walking with him in the Fields they met

met with a poor miserable *Lazar* full of Sores, and an Object of as much Pity as could well be imagin'd; Mr. *Hobbs* put his hand in his Pocket, and gave him a Shilling; at which the other check'd, and told him that in doing so he went contrary to his own Principles; for (said he) you expect no reward in the *other* World, holding there is no such thing; nor are you better, but something worse for it in this World. To which Mr. *Hobbs* reply'd You mistake Sir, I feel my self better for it already; for, ~~the~~ seeing the wretched condition of this Beggar, I found a sensible Regret and Trouble in my self; and now, seeing him look briskly, and cheerfully when I had given him that Shilling, it took that trouble off which Natural Compassion had given me before. and I feel my Fancy *better at ease*. This was the Motive of that Gentleman, and a Motive good enough for an Atheist. But since those well-meaning Christians we speak of, are Conscious to themselves that they are imbu'd with *Christian* Principles which enjoyn such Charitable

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Duties, and the Performance of them; over, they oblige them to do not put ought they reason, judge those *Christian* *Natural* *Vigilant* which stand for best Actions but they may be above, fully might, and swim, are doing, did, for part of the of their judged by themselves, and t, *truly* *sati* en took A ble they v that it could do t

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Duties, and *propose* Eternal Rewards to the Performers of them; and, moreover, they find that their Conscience checks them, if in signal occasions, they do not put them in practice; why ought they not, with much better reason, judge such Actions sprung from those *Christian* Motives than from *our Nature*. I do not forbid them to be *Vigilant* that the Spirit of *vain-glory*, which stands ever ready to taint even our best Actions, do not slyly creep in; but they may quickly discover by what's above, whether, tho' that empty Vanity might present it self to their *Fancy*, and swim *uppermost* there, while they are doing, or going to do that Action; and did, for all that, reach the *Superiour* part of the Soul, and corrupt the Goodness of their *Intention*: which will best be judged by their finding, or not finding themselves, after that action is past, and that vain Suggestion is over, *truly satisfied*, and well appay'd that they took *Notice* how good and Charitable they were. If they find not *this*, that it troubles them to think they could do that Action for such a *foolish* and

and *Sinful* Intention, which is the proffering the *applause* of Men before the *Praise from God*; then 'tis an Evident Sign that that Suggestion, tho' at the present it had a brisk and *lively* Appearance, was but a *Temptation*; all *Temptations* being of that Nature: And, can we do the Devil a greater Favour than to think that all his *Temptations* are our *Sins*; or, that every wicked attempt upon us he makes, has its effect, and makes us wicked too? If they find the least *reluctancy*, they are to judge they are on the *better hand*; for the *Temptation* is *very sensible*, being made in our *Inferiour* part, that is in the *Faculty*, or the *Appetite*; but the *Resistance* of it is from our *Principles* and *Intentions*, which are only found in the *Superiour* part of our Soul; which being purely *Spiritual*, they are of their own Nature *not sensible* at all; but must be gather'd from the *Reflexion* of our *Reason*.

10. Again, if, immediately afterwards, as soon as our *Superiour Part* is *well awake*, and reflects on our *Christian Duty*, of which our *Principles* inform us, we find that we reject such

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Motions of *Vanity*, (and the same may be said of any other Temptation) we ought to judge it was the *Devil's* Act, not *Ours*; or, at most, it is only some *surprize* of our *Fancy*, when we had either *none*, or but a *drowsie* Attention to our Principles, and former *Good Intentions*; which argues there was no *true* or *perfect* Deliberation; as will easily appear hence, that, when we come to *reflect* what had past in us, we presently begin to stir up our Principles of *Faith*, and set our selves to *reject* and *oppose* such sinful Suggestions: Some may tear they resisted but *faintly* at first; and perhaps it may be so; for every one is not so *perfectly vigilant* as to be aware of the first Alarm: yet this also may perhaps but *seem* so, because the bad Suggestions are very *stupid* and *lively*; and it is not (generally) in the Power of the Soul, to put a stop immediately to the hurry of the *Fancy*; or, all on the sudden, to *efface* the former Impression: Yet, as long as such Souls find any kind of *Reluctancy* or Trouble, they may rest
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secure, there was no *Consent*, and that the *Superiour* part of the Soul, tho' briskly assaulted, was not wounded perhaps not hurt at all: For that *Unwillingness* and *Repugnance* they find, must have *some cause*, and in likelihood a *Strong* one, since it bore the shock of such a brisk assault, and that Cause that made head against the Temptation cou'd not be *corrupt Nature*; it must be then our *Christian Principles*, stor'd up, fixt, and assisted by God's powerful *Grace* in the *Superiour Part* of the Soul: So that in likelihood, most of the blame which devout Souls do incur in such cases, is some want of *Christian Vigilance*; which might either have prevented the Temptation, or, at least, have hinder'd it from gaining *so much* strength as to grow too *troublesom*, and sometimes *dangerous*.

II. And, on this occasion, let me admonish *well-intending Souls* of another Frisk of the Fancy, which exceedingly perplexes many (especially those of the Devout Sex) who do not well distinguish the *Solid* and most *Serious* Acts of

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the *Mind*, which are *Spiritual*, from the idle and whiffling *Delusion* of the *Imagination*. Every Scholar who has studied well the Nature of *Man*, knows that, since the Soul in this state cannot work without some kind of Co-operation of the *Body*, or *Fancy*, we have *Phantasms*, Pictures, or Representations not only of *Exterior Objects* which come in by the *Senses*, but also of our *Reflex Acts* too, when we have a Knowledge of them; such as are our Acts of Knowing, Loving, Hating, Intending, Choosing, Deliberating, Resolving, &c. for 'tis manifest we have Knowledge of all these, otherwise we cou'd not know the *Meaning* of the *Words* that express them, which we are sure we do; and, on the other side, 'tis no less evident that none of these were *directly* imprinted in our Understanding by the *Senses*; they are therefore known by *Reflexion*; and therefore (as twas prov'd) they must have *distinct Phantasms* in our *Imagination* which go along with the several knowledges we have of them: Yet, those Phantasms were not *proper* ones as are those which come in *directly* from

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from Corporeal Objects by means of the Senses; but either *Metaphorical* Ones, borrow'd from these latter, and transferr'd thence to express or notify to us *Spiritual* things; or else meerly *arbitrary*, (such as we make use of in the Art of Memory) fram'd by the Man himself for his necessary Use, according to his Exigency: And, hence it comes that, when the Superiour part of the Soul is *not aware*, there is found a long Train of such Phantasms, which used to represent to us our Spiritual Acts, succeeding one another in a kind of *Order*; by which means we have lively Imaginations *counterfeiting* our *Loving* this or that in a high Measure, or *longing* for it; a full *Intention* to get it; and laying *Means* to compass it; with conformable *Counterfeit Passions* excited in us of *Hope* to obtain it, *Fear* of Losing it, and *Anger* against any thing that hinders the Attainment of it; and yet, all this while the Superiour part of the Soul, without the *Consent* of which there can be no *Sin*, nay not be in the least tainted or touch'd.

12. This Discourse will seem to many too Speculative and Abstracted; but an Instance, which I *know* to be true, will make it clearer. A young Student, at that time much given to Contemplation, with whose Interiour I was perfectly acquainted, had *wearied* and *fretted* Nature, and put her in an *ill humour* by keeping her short, and weaning her from Recreative Entertainments, that so he might hold her more strictly to *Recollection*. This made his Inferiour part abound with *Melancholy Humours*; tho', otherwise, of his own Nature he was free from that Temperament. Hereupon, when he was not in the free *deliberate* use of his *Practical* Judgment, but in the retired Circumstance of *Studying*, or now and then of *Praying*, he had sometime *long Romances* of this kind in his Fancy, *counterfeiting* all the former *Acts* of the Soul, and this with a *sensible Concern* accompanying them: when as all the while I am certain he had not really and indeed *one* of those *spiritual Acts*, but all was a meer *Farce* and *Whimsy* of the *Imagination*. For Ex:
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ample; he had once, in his *Fancy*, very Cruel Resentments against a particular Gentleman living in the same house, whom his Imagination *feigred* or *suppos'd* to have done him a great disparagement; when his perfect Reason knew as sure as he liv'd, he had done him *none at all*. Hence he *seem'd* to entertain most Uncharitable Intentions and Resolutions of being *Revenge'd* of him in a high manner; as also (his *Fancy* running on in a track) to *consult* about the *Way* how to put his Designs in Execution. In a word, there was no Punishment so severe, but he *seem'd* from his heart to wish it were *inflicted* on him. While *he*, (I mean his *Fancy*) was in this Implacable Mood, it happen'd that that very Person with whom he *seem'd* so inexorably offended, came to visit him, and knock'd at his Chamber-door; at which, awaking out of his *Angry Dream* by his going to meet him, all these Apparitions *vanish'd*, and, his Reason being now come to its self, he found plainly, that he *lov'd* him as *cordially*, and had as much *Charity*, and as true a *Friendship*

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for him as for any Man living; for they had, indeed, never had the least clash with one another in their whole Lives. So that, tho' this Dreamer was at that time in *some* sort awake; yet his *Spiritual* part, or his *Soul*, had no more share in all this rabble of Uncharitable Fancies, than if he had only *dream'd* them.

13. 'Tis the same as when our Fancy is taken up with reading a Romance; We seem to *wish well* to one of those fictitious persons, and long to see another of them *beaten* or *kill'd*. We seem to take *part* with *one side*, and to be *opposit* to the *other*; we are ready to weep at some dismal Passages or Mishaps to those we *affected*, to be *angry* at some, *sorry*, or *joyful* at *others*; but, rising to go about serious business, our Reason, *awaking* out of this deluding trance, and recovering it self, sees all this to be a *meer Fiction*, and so has *lost* her *Concern* for them. These Whimsies are like the *Night-Mare*, or, (as the Country People call it) the being *rid with the Hag* in our Sleep, when Melancholy Humours obsess the *Brain*

to that Degree that they obstruct the Passage, of the Animal Spirits into the Nerves which should give us *Motion*, and thence make us Incapable to *stir*. Those Phantasms which are subservient to our *Inferiour* part, or to *Passion*, do at that Season so *wholly* take up and possess the Brain, that there is *no room* left for those to come in play which we make use of to set our *Superiour* part, or our *Reason* a working; whence it becomes *inactive*, and (as it were) *benumm'd*; and, when our Reason works *not at all*, 'tis Impossible it should work *amiss*; onely *which* is Sin.

14. Now, how many Scruples and dreadful Apprehensions of many *deliberate Mortal Sins* would good weak Souls have had in such a case, if they were not able to distinguish between *solid Thoughts* and idle *Fancies*; between the *Mind* and *Imagination*; between what's *Corporeal*, and what's *Spiritual*; that is, between the *Superiour* and the *Inferiour* part of the Soul! Unless they can do *this*, they must needs mistake all these *Phantom*es of *Wishing*, *Intending*, &c. to be *Real*; which is enough

14. But, to apply this Discourse to that which frequently happens to others. As there is a *total* Suspension of our Rational Faculty, and for some *long* time in those Persons lately spoken of; so there happens very frequently some *Degree* of that Suspension, and for some *short* time, in the Generality of Good Christians. How often, as the Circumstance lights, does the course of our Spirits *run after*, and *addict* us to some even Lawful Object, and pitch our Fancy and Appetite upon it, so that we have no leisure, in that hurry, to reflect upon any thing else; much less on our *Principles*, which teach us our *exact Duty*; and thence fall into some *mistbecoming* Word or Action? If then, we find that, upon our *reflecting*, we *condemn* our selves, and are troubled

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at it, let none be Scrupulous for such *sudden Surprizes*. Such weak Darts of our Ghostly Enemy only *Glance* (as it were) on the *Surface* of a Soul, but do not pierce it, or wound it. Our good Heavenly Father knows (as K. David says) of *what we are made*. He mercifully considers how *short* our *Forefight* is, how *weak* our *strength*, and how incapable of perfect *Circumspection* our narrow and distracted *Attention*. He looks upon us as a tenderly loving Father does on his little Child that cannot walk alone, but staggers, totters, and is like to fall at every step. Let it but put forth its hand towards him with reliance on his Support, and presently he stretches out his to uphold, strengthen and conduct it. One devout Repetition of the Lord's Prayer, one Pious Ejaculation begging his pardon and help, will fully atone for such *childish slips*. Nay, one Sigh sent from a Loving and Humble Heart, is sufficient to blot out even *greater faults*. All farther Fretting and Whining dissatisfaction of such Souls, in such occasions, do generally proceed from some lurking Tang of

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Pride and self-Reliance, which makes us angry at our being *Disappointed* in the Opinion we had of our *own strength*. 'Tis as if a Man, who knows himself to be *Lame* and *Impotent*, should, instead of availing himself of his *Staff*, or *Crutch*, (for want of which he fell) stand repining at *himself* that he is no *stronger*. Well may such frequent unadvis'd Failings make good Souls *humble* themselves, strive to improve their *Christian Vigilance*, and apply more fervently to *Divine Grace* as their *only Help and Strength*; but no occasion can be taken thence to be in the least *Scrupulous*, without detracting at the same time from God's *Infinite Goodness*, as if he had no Consideration at all of *our weakness*, but only of *his own Greatness*, which is in effect to attribute to him *no Goodness at all*.

15. But, the greatest and most dreadful Scruples those Good Souls have, is, that they cannot *find* in themselves that they *Love God above all things*; without which it is most certain all their Actions are *Sinful*; and, therefore, let them endeavour all they

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can, all their labour is (for ought they know) *utterly lost*. I reflect here upon the word [*Fina*] and I ask them, how do they expect to *find* they thus *Love* God? As they *find* their Prayer-book in their Closet, or Money in their Purse? I have not only *told*, but *shown* them that they can only *find* Spiritual things, or what passes in their Souls *Spiritually*, by the Reflexion of their Reason. Wherefore I take leave to ask them some few Questions. Do they *love Happiness*? They must answer, *they do*: for Nature obliges every Man to desire to be *Happy*, tho' they too often *misplace* this *Happiness* in things unworthy of that Name; nor can any Man love to be *Miserable*. Next, do they judge their Happiness can consist in enjoying any thing in *this World*? I suppose these Souls I speak to, imbued with Christian Principles; and, therefore, they will answer they do *not think* it does, but in the Blessed Sight of their Glorious God in the *next Life*: And, even Common Natural Reason, if they reflect on what it dictates, tells them the same: For, they *find* by experience

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perience that no *Temporal Good fills* and *satiſies* the whole Capacity of their Wilkes, (without which their can be no Happiness,) but they still *deſire more*. Beſides, they can enjoy thoſe Goods but for the *ſhort* Leaſe of their Lives, and then they know they muſt loſe them afterwards *for ever*. Wherefore, if they place their Happiness in *them*, they muſt ſee they ſhall be *for ever* Unhappy afterwards: The Certain knowledge of which muſt needs *damp* and *deſtroy* all their imagin'd Happiness while *here*: For, how can it conſiſt with the Notion of *true Happiness* to know they ſhall only have that Imaginary Fading Blis for a *ſhort time*, and afterwards be *Eternally Miſerable* for the Loſs of it. If then theſe Good Souls cannot but love *Happiness*, as they are *Men*; and, as they are *Chriſtians*, cannot but know that no *Temporal Good* can make them Happy, but only the Beatifying Sight of God; why ſhould they fancy it is ſo hard to *love him more* than any *Created Good*, that is, to love him *above all things*? Let us conſider a Man who places his Chief

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Happiness in Honour, Riches, Corporal pleasures, Ambition, &c. Can he but *love* that Honour, Pleasure, &c. in which he *placed* his Happiness? By the same Reason, if they heartily *place* their happiness in God as their *Last End*, and acknowledge him to be *such*, how can such Souls, especially being daily employ'd in such Actions as tend to make them *Love him, as such*, take a conceit they do not *Love him above all things*?

16. They will say, it follows hence, indeed, that they *ought* to do so, but that Worldly Objects which continually and on every side surround our Senses, and, striking upon Fancy, do excite in us Conformable Appetites to court our Affections, may, (notwithstanding this *Speculative* Knowledge that only God is our true *Last End*) when we come to put this Knowledge in Practice, *warp* our *Wills* towards *them*; or else no Christians who hold and believe God is their only happiness, could be damned. Now, did they say that no Christian who *believes* this, and *endeavours to work accordingly*, will miscarry;

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I should easily grant it. However, 'tis a good Objection, (tho' the Application of it to themselves be *Faunt*) and therefore it deserves clearing.

17. Let us consider then a Worldling who makes any of these *False Goods* now spoken of his *Last End*, and places his Happiness in obtaining it: 'Tis manifest, both by plain Reason and constant Experience, that this *Temporary Good* being the *darling Object* of that Power of his, call'd the Will, which sets all the rest on work, will oblige him to employ all his best endeavours to attain it. He will therefore *Intend* and *Aim* at it as a kind of Happiness; he will industriously *set on foot* all his Projects to *compass* it. He will *remove* all *obstacles* that hinder his acquiring it; and *style* all Considerations of what's *Lawful*, what's *Unlawful*, that would check his pursuit of it. He will hate *prayers*, as Upbraiders of his *Resolute Wickedness*; and therefore he will use them only for a *show*, much less is he at all concern'd whether he *prays well* or *ill*. He will, at least, for some time after he has got it (perhaps all his Life) *hug*
and

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and *care*s it; he will *acquiesce* and *repose* in it with a hearty satisfaction and content, and think himself truly happy for a while in *enjoying* it. Do these good Souls observe, upon their severest scrutiny and reflexion, that their Will is thus concern'd and attach'd to any *Temporary* Good; or such Trifles as their *Senses*, working upon their *Fancy*, propos'd to them? They will, on the contrary, easily observe that their *serious* and most *Affectionate* Thoughts are *not* finally fix'd and bent upon *such* Objects. Their first care is to discover whether it be *lawful* or *unlawful*, lest they should love it *too much*, or pursue it. They will discern that, when such Objects begin to *gain ground* upon their Will, and make it begin to *over-affect* them, or attempt an *Irregular* Acquisition of them, there starts up in their Soul a *Sovereign* Law which controls that Exorbitant Appetite, and curbs it from proceeding farther. This *predominant* Law, I say, establish'd on Christian Principles, acts or exercises all the parts of an *Absolute* and all Commanding *Sovereign*. It *annuls* and *Re-*
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peals the Acts of the *Law of our Members*, (as *St. Paul* calls Original Concupiscence) it arraigns & condemns all such Extravagant Motions, and Sentences them to be guilty of High Treason against God, and therefore worthy of Death, or deserving to be Mortified. They may observe that their Soul when it is it self, or has full deliberation, is not pleased, but troubled at the very Thought of doing that which wicked Sinners do with the full Bent of their Will pursue. They will find a Regret if they seem but to have dally'd, or admitted a Parly with such Thoughts; and, lastly, they are highly satisfied interiorly, and exult with Joy when they have overcome and subdu'd such unwelcome Suggestions. 'Tis then a truth as evident as Noon-day, that such Souls do not place their Chief Affection on any Temporary Good as their Last End; wherefore, since it has been manifestly shown above, that we must, in all deliberate Actions, aim at, or intend, and consequently love something as our last End; that is, Love it, above all things, and no Worldly Good, (as is here shown)

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shown) or *no Creature was thus Lov'd* by those well-intending Persons; and there can be nothing but either God, or *Creatures*; they may rest assur'd, that as long as they preserve this *Good Intention*, which curbs their Consent to these wicked Suggestions, inviolate, or *Unretracted*, they *do love God above all things*, and therefore are truly *lov'd by him* as his dear *Children*; that is, they may be Certain they are, thro' his Mercy, in the *State of Grace*; or, (which is the same) that they *Pleaze him*, or are *Acceptable* to him.

18. I know this Doctrine will hardly yet be agreeable to those ruder and unreflecting Souls, who are not enur'd to distinguish Spiritual things perfectly from Corporeal ones; their unelevated Thoughts are still so kept down, and stick so fast in the Mire of their Senses, that they cannot think they *love God above all things*, unless they have some *Sensible Feeling* of it: Wherefore, my chief End, in writing this Treatise, being to raise Souls to true *Spirituality*, or to make them (as the Scripture phrases it) *veri Adoratores*,

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raters, *True Adorers*, or such as wor-
ship God in Spirit and in Truth; I shou'd
think my self happy, if I cou'd wean
them from this Misconceit that they
must necessarily have a *sensible Feeling*
of this Love, without which they can-
not be perswaded they have it. Their
Errour seems chiefly to arise from the
Common Signification of the Word
[Love,] which importing in its first
and obvious Signification among the
Vulgar, a *Passion*, which is alwaies *Sens-*
sible; and Experience telling us, that
our Love of earthly Objects, with
which we converse, is generally accom-
pany'd, more or less, with this Sensible
Passion, especially if we love them
dearly; therefore, to rectify them, and
to bring them by degrees to understand
the Spiritual Love we ought to bear
towards God, we will make use of *ano-*
ther Word in use among us, which ex-
presses our Love of something, because
our Reason tells us 'tis a great Good,
and not because it made an Agreeable
Impression on our *Sense*; and instead of
[Love] we will, for a while, sub-
stitute the Word [Value,] upon
which I discourse thus: 19. We

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19. We find we Value a *piece* of Gold more than so much *Glaſs*, and conſequently we *love* it more, or had much rather have it than the *other*; We find this Value, or Love of it is ſteady in our Mind, and the *Preſerence* of it to the Glaſs is deeply imprinted in our Judgment; We find how *ſtrangely* and *effectually* Gold carries Men towards the Attainment of it, more than ſo much Glaſs; And why? Not becauſe of a Motive ſprung from its better affecting our *Senſes*; for Glaſs, when placed in the full Light, or in the Sun, reflects Light better, and has a more glorious Appearance than Gold has; (whence thoſe to whom Gold is *familiar*, and who never ſaw Glaſs *before*, are ſaid to prize *this* far more than the *other*;) but, becauſe of a Motive ſprung from our *Reason*; or becauſe Uſe and Cuſtom has made Gold a common Means to procure and purchaſe *all* our other Conveniences which are needful and beneficial to us in our Civil Life: And, in regard this *Value* or *Love* of Gold did come into us by our *Reason*, hence the Affection we have for

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for it, is *less sensible* than is the Love we have for Meat, Drink, dear Friends, and Relations, which are more agreeable to our Inferiour part, or our Nature.

By which Discourse we see how we must not take the Measure of our finding such a degree of the *Love* of God in us, because we *feel* in us such and such a *sensible* Affection for it; but from this, that we *value* Heaven above created Goods; which *Value* and *Preference* of it in our thoughts, did not arise from its better affecting our *Sense*, but from the Proposals that *Faith* made to our *Reason*, which made it infinitely preferable; and therefore, if we find, that we perform *constantly* and *seriously* those Actions which the same Faith assures us are the Means to attain it, and avoid constantly such actions as we conceive will make us miss it, and this out of an *Undervalue* of these Goods in respect to the other; then we may be assured, that we do really *intend*, *value*, and *love* Heaven above all things; whether this

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Overvalue of it, in comparison of the other, (which implies a predominant Love for it) be *Sensible* or no.

DISCOURSE X.

That 'tis very Possible for many, if not most Well-meaning Souls, to know assuredly that they are in the State of Grace.

1. **I** Have reason to be apprehensive that this Position will be disliked by many, who (with a good Intention too) may perhaps think that the way of Governing Souls by an Awful Fear of God's Greatness, is a more effectual way of keeping Men upright in Virtue, than is the Love of him for his Goodness. Indeed, with such Christians as are great Libertines, and drink Iniquity like Water, or those who carelessly fall often into Mortal Sin out of Presumption on his Mercy, it would be proper to *startle*

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and strive to terrifie their Stupid and Obstinate Souls with denouncing to them God's Fearful *Judgments*; and press to them the *Detestation* and *Harm*, our infinitely *Pure* and *Holy* God bears against *Sin*, and the *Seravity* of his *Justice* in punishing it. But, we are not here speaking of such profligate Wretches; but of such *Good*, (tho' perhaps somehing *weak*) Souls who have a care of their Salvation; and do not neglect their Prayers, but do devoutly frequent the Sacraments, and other ordinary Means, to preserve and improve their Virtue; and yet are scrupulous, that either they *alwaies* do ill, or *seldom* well. 'Tis to comfort these, without *flattering* them in what they do amiss, that I advance this Doctrine.

2. And, were there nothing but the Inestimable *Benefit* it brings to such Souls, it would be sufficient to evince the Truth of such a Position. How effectually would it *oblige* them to a *Reciprocal Love* of God, who so mercifully vouchsafes to accept their poor endeavours to serve Him, tho' perform'd with

with some Imperfection? How would it *encourage* them in their Pious and Charitable Endeavours to know that they are *Grateful* to his Divine Majesty? What Transports of Joy and *Exultation* (frequently mention'd in David's Psalms, and by other devout Persons in Scripture) would it cause in them, to be ascertain'd that they are *Belov'd* by the King of Heaven and Earth, and consequently by all the whole Glorious Court of his Saints and Angels? How careful would they be every Step they tread, not to *lose* such an *Unvaluable* Dignity? How would it *excite* them to *improve* in virtue, *strengthen* them against Temptations, and to *endure* cheerfully all Afflictions and Persecutions, while they are assur'd they have an *All-Powerful* Friend on their side; who, since he *loves* them, will order all Events, how harsh so ever they may seem, not to *punish* them, but to *perfect* and *purify* their Souls, and by that Means to *secure* and *increase* their Reward in Heaven? Lastly, what *incredible* Consolation would it give them at the *hour of Death*? how

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would it take away the *Natural Fear* of it, and quite blunt and break its *Sting*, to see and consider that they are putting their Souls into *his* hands, who they are well assur'd is their *Friend* and *Living Father*; and does only ordain the Passage of Death, as a *Threshold* by which they are to *step over* into Heaven.

3. On the other side, how *Uncomfortable* a Life would the Generality of well-meaning Christians lead, if, after having us'd their constant Endeavours for a great part of (perhaps their whole) Life, they must still hover in *Uncertainty*, whether any thing they had ever done were acceptable to God or no? Nay, be ignorant whether God *loves* or *hates* them? How will it be apt to breed in them a *Misconceit* of God's Infinite *Goodness*, if they are taught or made to apprehend that, tho' they use their weak power to please him, he is so *austere* and *rigid*, that they can never be sure they give Him any *Content*? What a *Discouragement* and *Hesitation* will it breed in their progress to lead

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lead a virtuous Life, not to be certain whether they take one right Step? How will it diminish their *Hope* in his Goodness, and consequently their *Hearty Love* of him in which consists all our Christian Virtue? What *Anxiety* and *Horrour* must it needs cause in them not to know, notwithstanding they have lived as other Devout and Pious Christians use to do, whether, all the while, for any thing they know, they are running towards *Hell* or no; and they must, if they do not know whether any thing they do, does truly please God, and put them in his Favour, or in the State of Grace. Lastly, what *frightful Apprehensions* and tormenting *Scruples* will *overwhelm* them at the *Hour of Death*, when they see themselves upon the brink of Eternity, if they can never come to be assured they are prepar'd to dy, or dispos'd for Heaven; or, which is the same, in God's Favour at that Season? These Considerations, and particularly my Zeal to promote good Souls in the Love of God, and to free them

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them from *Irrational* and Uncomfortable *Fears*, and Inextricable *Scruples*, (to which, in my Opinion, the contrary Doctrine gave some Occasion,) were the true Motives which oblig'd and forc'd me in Charity to advance this Doctrine, tho' I saw it was opposite to the Common Opinion of many Learned and Pious Masters of Spirituality; Especially, I attempted this hazardous Task, because I saw evidently it was more agreeable to the *Law of Grace*; in which by our confident, tho' humble, Reliance on the Merits of our dear Redeemer, we are to look upon our selves as *Sons*, and on God as on our Loving Father; and not as on a harsh and severe Lord, ready still to hold over us the Rod of his *Wrathful Indignation*; so that we cannot be secure when it will fall heavy upon us, even tho' our Chief Intention be to perform his Holy Will.

4. What's said hitherto may, I hope, be sufficient to prove, that it is not the Will of our Good Heavenly Father to deny the *Comfort* and Satisfaction of knowing they are in his Favour, to those

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those well-meaning Souls who do *fin-
cerely intend* to serve Him, and to keep
his Commandments. Yet, it being re-
quisit to clear this Point more fully,
I shall first premise a few Notes to re-
move, or *prevent* some possible Mistake
of my Meaning. Next, I shall, as I
hope, alledge diverse *convincing* Proofs
of my Position; and, lastly, satisfy
some Objections that may be made
gainst it.

§ First, then, I desire it may be
noted, that 'tis not my Intention to
maintain that any Man, tho' a Saint
at present, can, without a special Revela-
tion, be assur'd of his *Final Perse-
rance* in Virtue, but he is to work out
his Salvation with *Fear and Trembling*.
He that stands (says St. Paul) let him
take heed he does not fall. He cannot
but know that his Original Corruption
is still at hand to deprave his Will;
that the World, which is full of *Vari-
eties*, and of wicked *Livers*, surround
him on all sides; and excites and assails
our *Innate Biasses* to Sin, by seeing
many *Bad Examples*; which, passing
oft-times *Uncontroll'd*, do, in some sort

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Authorize Vice, while they are allow'd
(as it were) to be the *General Custome*.
And the Devil is ever at hand to make
use of the other two, and improve them
to the heighth, by his deceitful Sophi-
stry. And, what Man, who experi-
ences his own Frailty, can assure him-
self he shall still obtain that degree of
Grace, as to be able to *bear up* against
both his *Intestine*, and his *Forreign* En-
emies? Yet, notwithstanding, he may
be Certain he shall not miscarry but
thro' his own *Fault*; as also, that he
will not become so *faulty* as to be left
a *Prey* to his Ghostly Enemy, while he
makes use of his *Christian Principles*,
and of those *Means* of reducing them to
practice, which are prescrib'd him by
the Discipline of the *Church*, and the
Instructions of his *Lawful Pastours*.
What is here only asserted, is, that
the Generality of devout Christians *may*
have Certainty of the State of their
Souls *at present*; and that they have
those *good Intentions*, and *Dispositions* of
their Will, which the Doctrine of Chri-
stianity assures us do put our Souls in
God's Favour, and make the Holy
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Ghost dwell in their Hearts Spiritually by Charity or Sanctifying Grace.

6. Next, while I speak of well-meaning Souls, I do by those words exclude all *Hypocrites*, and those who are beleper'd with *Spiritual Pride*. The former do so constantly practice *Fa shood* both to God and *Man*, that they cannot be true even to themselves, or make a right Judgment of their own Condition. A Formal *Outward Appearance* is all they aim at; and they make a Mockery within themselves at *Sincerity* and *Reality*, as not *Politick* enough for their Humour. Which Sophisticate carriage, if it grows *Habitual* in them, it will make them fancy themselves to be *Saints*, when they are really *Limbs of the Devil*. Those of the Later sort rely on the frail *Reed* of their own strength, and on their Fantastick *Free Will*. Whence, abandoning the Assistance of God's *Grace*, and *CHRIST'S Merits*, they forfeit all Title to their Protection. To foment this Humour in them, the Devil does not much tempt such Souls to *Open* and *Opprobrious Sins*, because those do not suit well with their

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plausible *Vanity*, and *Pride*; which he strives to cultivate in them, because he knows that, having *that fast hold* of them, they are more surely *his*; the other sorts of Open Sins being more easie to be repented of. Hence, they gain the repute of *Saints* among the Vulgar, which pleases them mightily: But wiser Men look thro' their Mask by observing their Uncharitable *Censoriousness* of others, their *Revengefulness*, and their being addicted to *Detraction*, *Slander*, and *Calumny*; all which are Sins almost of the *first Magnitude*; they being such Vices as are utterly Inconsistent with the least Degree of *Sanctity*, or *true Virtue*, and directly Opposite to *Charity*, the Queen of Virtues; without which, let them look as gravely and demurely as they will, there can be no *true Religion*.

7. I do not affirm that even Good Souls are *jure* they are in such a good condition by observing *every slight Good Action* they do, (tho' in some *Signal* ones they may): There is, generally, some *Contingency* and *Uncertainty* in *Particulars*: I only say that, by re-

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reflecting on the *Univerſality* of their Actions (in which they *conſtantly* guide themſelves by God's Commandments;) and by their *Conſciouſneſs*, that, in their *moſt ſerious* thoughts, they reject all *ſiniſter Worldly Intentions*, when they perceive they would attempt to govern their Actions, and direct them to do any thing that is *Unlawful*; In ſuch a caſe, I ſay, (if they be not ſo timorouſly ſcrupulous that they dare not truſt their own Experience) ſuch Souls cannot but have certain knowledge that God has *ſanctified* their Souls by his *Heavenly Grace*; it being impoſſible that a conſtant and continued Train of ſuch Intentions, and purſuant Actions, ſhould have *any other Origin*.

8. Laſtly, I do not contend it is ſo eaſy to know the State of their Souls, as to *Venial Sins*, and Common Imperfections. There needs much *exact Reflexion* on their Peculiar Inclinations, and frequent, and attentive Examination of their Conſcience, to get a clear Sight and perfect Knowledge how far they are guilty of ſuch *leſſer Deviations*. Many of them ſeem ſo *ſlight*, that they

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are not easily discernible, because they do not *shock* their Conscience so rudely as do those faults which are *Mental*: These later being directly *against* the Rule of Christian Life, the former only *beside* it; and, much like the *flanting*, of an Arrow, which stills flies towards that Quarter to which it was *Aim'd*; tho' the *direct Course* of it was something *stop'd* and *hinderd*.

DISCOURSE XI.

Several Arguments to prove that it is not hard for well-meaning Devout Souls to know assuredly they are in God's Favour, or the State of Grace.

1. **W**E come now to prove that it is not only *possible*, but *Easy* for many well-meaning Devout Souls to *know assuredly* that they are in God's Favour, or (as we use to express it) in the *State of Grace*. To evince
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which comfortable and concerning Truth, so many pregnant Arguments do offer themselves, that 'tis hard to know with which of them to *begin*, and harder to *enumerate* them *all*. But, e'er I *begin*, I must profess that I am almost at a stand whether I should spend Arguments upon a Point that seems to me so *Plain* and *Indisputable*, in case the *meaning* of the Words in which the Question is propos'd be but rightly understood. For, I am half afraid that this Phrase [*in the state of Grace*] does, in some Mens Apprehensions, print it self in such a Great Letter, that they conceit there is some deep Mystery in it: whereas those words do only signify that *Good Actions*, done by well-meaning Christians with a *Good Intention*, are *Pleasing to God*; and, consequently, that all such *Persons* who do such Actions, are *Pleasing to him* also; Nor can I think, (however a Pious *Dread* of God's Wrath, may mislead some, while their Fear makes them speculate too much upon *Plaineſt* things) but that all *Good* and *Sensible* Christians, were they interrogated by the Poll, and were to

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speak their Genuin Thoughts which
 Christianity gives them, would easily
 yield the whole Point without hesitati-
 on For, who can say either that we
 do not know whether such Actions as
 God has *commanded*, do please him or no ;
 or that he is not pleased with those who
 do such Actions, or keep his *Command-*
ments ; or that neither those Persons
themselves, nor those who *guide* their
 conscience, and are to *absolve* them if
 they require it, do know whether they
 do keep God's Commandments *subst-*
antially well, or as they ought ; tho' per-
 haps they may fall short of performing
 this with the *utmost perfection* ; which
 excludes none from the State of Grace.
 Yet, for the farther satisfaction and
 conviction of those who, out of a Cust-
 om of thinking otherwise, do *still*
doubt, we will fall to our Arguments.

2 In the first place then, I prove my
 Position from the Nature of *Christianity*,
 and from the *End* of our Saviour's Com-
 ming into the World ; which was to
 plant such a *System* or Body of Mo-
 tives to raise our Hearts from over-
 powering Affection to *Temporary Goods*,

and to a *Predominant Love* of Heaven, as were *superabundantly* sufficient for that End. Whoever considers the wonderful *Mercy* of *G O D*, and his *Love* shown to Mankind in the *Incarnation* of his only Son; the whole course of our *Saviour's Life* here amongst us, both as to his *Holy Doctrine*, his *Actions*, and *Penal Sufferings*; the whole Tendency of the *Instructions* he gave us; the Efficacy of the *Sacraments* he instituted for the same End; his Glorious *R-surrection* and Admirable *Ascension*; the Sending the *Blessed Spirit* of Love to plant, animate, and strengthen his Church; the Sacred *Precepts* and Exhortations with which the Divinely-inspir'd Writings abound; the *Examples* of all his Blessed Saints, Martyrs, Confessours, Virgins, and Religious; whose devout Affections for Heaven overcame and trampled under foot the Love of the *World*, and even of their own *Lives*; the Pious *Sermons* and *Instructions* of Pastours, and innumerable other *Means* laid by *God's* Supernal Providence to win, and even to oblige, us to *disregard* the *World*, and all

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Temporary Goods that offer to come in competition with the *Love of GOD*, and to fix our *Chief Affection* upon *Heaven*: whoever, I say, considers all these, will see that they are *proper*, and most *Effectual Causes* to set right the Crooked Byas which Original Sin gave us, and to direct our Affections for Heaven. Since then nothing can be more Evident than that a *Proper Cause*, if it be *Apply'd*, will have its *Effect* upon a *Patient* which is *dispos'd* to receive its Influence; and the *Disciplin* of the Christian Church (which these good Souls do submit to, and *follow*) does *daily* apply many, or most of those Motives to them; and they are *willing* (that is *Dispos'd*) to receive the Influence and Virtue of these *Motives*; since we experience they are troubled, and even scrupulous, they comply with them *no better* even as to *Venial Imperfections*; nor can any of an ordinary Pitch be *Ignorant* of any of these Particulars which give force to our Argument; it follows that they may, to their Comfort, *certainly know*, and without detriment to their Humility, rationally conclude and

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judge that, while they are in this Disposition to make use of those most Effectual Means, and *continue* in it, they are truly *Children of God*, and in the *Favour of their Heavenly Father*. But, let it be observed, that none can have more than a *faint Hope* that they are, or at least can *continue* long, in this Happy State; if, out of presumption, they do *carelessly* give the full Swing to *Venial Sins*, or to violent *By-Affections* to Creatures: for, in that case, how can they with good Ground, or, indeed, without a rash and foolish Confidence, *hope* GOD will in a special manner *assist* them from falling into *Mortal Sins*, (to which the others *dispose*,) if they neglect to root out of their Wills those *Lesser Ones*, which are *Dispositions*, or *Steps* to them; and which, if fomented and permitted to *encrease*, will in time eat out, and wear away the true *Love of God*; which is of too *pure* a Nature to bear long a *great alloy* of such *Spiritual Dross*, as is a *resolute Affection* to them, and a *Perfectly-Deliberate and Hearty Entertaining* of them. Which yet I do not here Suppose to be the Case

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Case of *those* Devout Souls I speak of; and, therefore it can bring no prejudice to the present Argument. Let none here object the *Perversity* or *Fickleness* of our Wills. For, first, this Heavenly Doctrine was intended to *overcome* the *Perversity*, and *fix* the Mercurial *Inconstancy* of Man's Corrupt Will, (this being the Chief End of our Saviour's *Coming*) in case it be *well apply'd*. Next, the Persons we speak of are not supposed to be *perverse*, but *well-dispos'd* to receive that good *Effect* which those Means are capable of *producing*: nor to be *Fickle*, but *Constant* in performing their Christian Duties; all which renders the Objection weak and impertinent.

3. Some may perhaps fear that all this Body of Means to Virtue, are but so many *Proposals*, which the Will may *reject*; and, moreover, that to make these so efficacious as to breed in Souls the Love of *GOD*, does tend to evacuate the Necessity of *Actual Grace*, which is most certainly requisite to every good Action. I answer, first, that they are not bare *Proposals*,
but

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Proposals, but also *Motives*. A meer *Proposal* has no other effect proper to it, but to make the thing proposed *taken Notice* of. But *Motives* have for their proper effect to *move* the Powers they affect; and the Peculiar effect of these *Motives* here spoken of, is, to *move* Souls to *Charity* or *Love of Heaven above all things*. Nor can it be doubted that they move us *actually* in all due occasions, while (as is suppos'd) we lead our Christian Life according to them, every Circumstance of which Life puts them *in Act*. They are of their own Nature the *Proper* and *Effectual Means* which the Divine Goodness makes use of to give us his Grace; and the *Exercising* them is also most proper to give us *Actual Grace*. But to proceed with our Arguments.

4. *Sec ndly*. if these good Souls can be assur'd *they do love God* above Creatures, or above *all things*, (as has been prov'd at large they *may*;) then they may be perfectly assur'd *God loves them*, or that they are in *his favour*. No Text in the whole Scripture be-

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ing more plain beyond all Exception than is that (*Prov. 8. v. 17*) *Ego diligentes me diligo, I love them who love me.* Nor, indeed is there any Tenet in Christian Morality more Sacred, or more Universally accepted than 'tis, that *Charity is the fulfilling of the Law, or the Complement and Epitome of all Virtues, the High Road to Heaven, and the Immediate Disposition to Glory.*

5. *Thirdly*, if they seriously reflect on their own Thoughts and Actions, they cannot but gather what it is they chiefly look after and *Intend*; or what Good it is that they finally aim at as the *Last End*, or *Principal Object* of their Will: for, they will find that their care of not losing *That*, will keep all their other Actions in *Awe*, and oppose them if they hinder them in the pursuit of that *best-beloved Good*. This has been over and over sufficiently shown above; yet it being a Consideration of such main Importance, I shall take a little more pains, in this seasonable occasion, to inculcate it *again*, and enforce it *further*. Such an Intention as is here described, is of so predominant a Nature that

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that it *subordinates* to it all our other most deliberate *Actions*, & our *Intérieur Acts* too, and sets them all on work to compass this *Chief Good* which was thus *Intended*. Instances will show this more clearly, tho' indeed the Course of our whole Life bears ample Testimony to this Truth: For Example, a Miser *Fixes* his Heart upon *Money* as his *Chief Good*; hereupon he sets his most Sollicitous Thoughts on work to *consult* by what Means he can best attain it: having found out, and *chosen*, what he thinks the best Means, he *applies* his utmost Industry to *make use* of them, and puts his Grand Design in *Execution*. If any consideration occurs to his Thoughts, that would put him *by* the Prosecution of that Chief Intention; for example, a Suggestion that it is *Unlawful*; he *rejects* it, and still follows and pursues his *Avaricious End*; for, did the regard to any *other Good* *deturn* him, then, *that Good* and not the *other* was indeed that Good which he *most affected*. Again, he finds himself *disquiet* if any *Obstacle* be put to the acquisition of it; and, lastly, he looks upon himself

as

as a *Lost Man*, and as utterly *Undone* and *Miserable*, if his endeavours miscarry, and that he *falls short* of it. The same may be said of an *Ambitious Man*, if his *first* Affection be set upon *Honour*; of a *Voluptuous Man*, if he places his Chief Happiness in *Corporeal Pleasure*, and so of all the rest.

6. To apply this; Do these Good Souls we speak of, behave themselves on this fashion in order to any *Temporary Good*? Do they set their *whole hearts* upon it, and strain their best Wits to compass it at *any Rate*? If Christian Principles *cross* their *Thoughts*, and *admonish* them that that *End*, or the *Means* to it, are *Unlawful*, do they *fight* and *contemn* their Admonitions? do they *resolutely proceed* to break thro' all those most Sacred Rules, rather than *forgo* it; and, in despite of them all, go on with equal ardour pursuing it? If they *lose* it, do they look upon themselves as *utterly undone*? They cannot but know as *certainly* as that they *Live*, that they do *not* do any of these Things, but the *quite contrary* in every Particular. Wherefore they cannot but know, unless

unless they will renounce their *Reason* and *Common Sense*, that they do not *Intend* any Creature as their *Last End*, or *Chief Good*; that is, (since it has been proved impossible but they must aim at *something* as their *Last End*) they cannot but know 'tis only their *God* and *Creatour* whom they *Intend* or prefix to themselves as their *True Happiness*, or as their *Chief* and most *Desirable Good*; and that they *value* him, to that *incomparably* high Degree, that they are *Scrupulously afraid* if they seem, even in their *Thoughts* (or in their *Fancy*) to have given way to *over-love* any thing *else*. Now, if they do *Intend* Heaven as their *Last End*, 'tis impossible but they must *Love* it as such, or *Love it above all things*; since none can *Intend* to get a thing he does not *Love*; And, if they thus *love God*, their *Eternal* and *Infinite Good*, *above all Things*, they must know (as was shown lately) that *God loves them*, and that they are in the *State of Grace*.

7. But, fourthly, how perfectly will it compleat their Satisfaction when they come to consider these following

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Particulars, viz. that, besides this *Natural* and *Civil* Life which they lead here, they know they have, moreover, a *Christian Life*, which depends on other Principles than do the two former, and that they come to us by Divine Revelation; every one of which tends to raise them above the *World*, and to the Love of *Heaven*, as also to conserve and perfect them in that Love: That all their Actions which issue from those Principles, are the most *Serious* and most *Deliberate* that are possible: (as may be seen in our Prayers, and other *Christian Duties*;) and that they are, withal, of a *Superiour* Nature and Order to the others, being justly held and esteem'd *Sacred*. That they experience they have an *Invisible Spring* in the inmost Recess of their Soul, call'd their *Intention*, which sets all those Actions on work, as it does all the several Actions of our other two sorts of Life; and has such a *Sovereign* Influence over *Nature*, that it takes upon it to controll every Motion that dares presume or pretend to debauch their Wills to any *Excessive* Love of *Creatures* which is repugnant to that

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that *Supreme Law*, or comes in competition with the *Love of Heaven*. That they experience also, that, (when they are perfectly aware) it *rejects* all ill Suggestions, it *resists* Temptations, it gives them a *Ticub'e* and *Regret* if they have seem'd even to have *delay'd* the repelling them and making head *against* them. Again, they experience that they do *examin* their *Consciences* whether they have carefully, diligently, and vigilantly done their Duties in *this* kind; and that they do humbly *accuse* themselves in the most *solemn* manner upon *their knees* to *CHRIST*'s Minister in the Sacrament of Penitence; and *submit* themselves to make what *satisfaction* he shall think fit to enjoin them, even for their *Venia* Negligences. All which Actions c'learly importing a *direct* Tendency to *some* End that is *above Nature*, and being of a Genius quite *contrary* to the Propensions that *corrupt Nature* gives them, do evidently argue that they had not *Nature* for their Original, but the *Holy Ghost* working *supernaturally* in their hearts by *Sanctifying Grace*, or *Love of Heaven* above all things; and,

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Consequently, that they are in the *State of Grace*.

8. *Fifthly*, our Blessed Saviour has prov'd convincingly that by Mens *Works* we shall know whether Pretenders to Virtue or Sanctity be *Good* or *Bad*; and, 'tis to be noted that he speaks there of *our* knowing the Moral Goodness and Badness of *others*; which, (since it is impossible for us to see their *Hearts*,) must mean, that we shall know it by a *long Train*, or *constant course* of their Actions; a *few* being insufficient for us to make such a Judgment of them; for, *Design* may enable them to *counterfeit* for a *while*, or in *some* particular Outward Deeds; but it is impossible but their *Ill Principles*, and *Bad Intentions*, tho' cloak'd with all the Art of Hypocrisy for *some* time, and in *some* occasions, will at *length* break forth and *discover* their Nature by their *proper Effects*. But, it is much more Easy for a well meaning Christian, who is Conversant with his *own* Thoughts, by frequently examining his Conscience, and his endeavouring by the help of his Confessarius to sift and ransack
every

every Corner in the Closet of his breast, to gain knowledge of *his own Interior*. Such a Person cannot but know, I say, if he will but reflect at all, what Object does most *sway* his Practical Judgment when he comes to *act*; and whether he voluntarily *admits* and *bids welcome* to Worldly Temptations, when they present themselves to him; whether he gives them a full Scope and Unbridled Licence in his *glad* and *well satisfy'd* Thoughts; or, (as was said above) whether he finds *Another*, and a *Predominant Law* within his Soul, which check'd and condemn'd the *Law of his Members* (as St. Paul calls Concupiscence) and *binds* those *raw* Thoughts, which the Temptation suggested, from *ripening*, and *prevented* them from proceeding to *Execution*. This, then, being the Course of Humane Actions, and the Natural Sequel of them to one another, if Men experience none of these Subsequent Acts do follow one another *in order*, but that they find something in their Interior which *puts a stop* to their *wild Career*; then they may be perfectly assur'd that 'tis the Omnipotent

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potent Virtue of God's *Sanctifying Grace*, which (it being rooted in their Wills) stood *firm*, *resisted*, and *subdued* those violent Impulses of Corrupt Nature; and consequently, that they are, at these victorious Seasons, in the *State of Grace*.

9. This comfortable Truth is so *pregnant* of Reasons to fortifie it, that, new proofs occurring by the Way, I had forgot to *clinch* my late Argument; which is best done by alledging that either no Proof can be drawn from the *Deeds* by which Men are to know whether the Doers be themselves really good or no, which would seem to evacuate our Blessed Saviour's Argument; or else, that, since every well meaning Christian can *better* know their *own Thoughts* and *Good Deeds* than those of *another*; it follows that, if they could not know by the *constant tenour* of their *own Good Actions*, that they proceeded from *God's Grace* in them, none could ever discover any *other Man* to be *Good*, or (as our Saviour says) know the *Tree by the Fruit*.

10. But, to proceed to my sixth
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Argument: what shall we say of so many Glorious Martyrs, who endur'd such astonishing Torments, and laid down their *Lives* so contentedly and joyfully for Christ's sake? What of Innumerable Holy Confessours, Contemplatives, and Religious Persons, who so long'd to be *dissolv'd, and to be with CHRIST*, that the most *pleasant Life* here, was a *Pain* to them while it kept them from Him? What of Myriads of *Good Christians*, who, from the beginning of the Church have, and still do, voluntarily and gladly suffer Imprisonment, Banishment, loss of Goods, Dereliction of Friends, Opprobrious Revilings, and many other Penalties or Hardships for the *undaunted Profession* of their *Faith*, or their *Constancy in Virtue*? It would be a hard saying to affirm that these good Souls wanted the Comfort of being well assur'd that God, for whose sake they underwent all these troubles, was not their *Friend* and they in his *favour*; but that, for any thing they know, they were still in the *State of Damnation*. It would be reply'd *gratis*, and without Proof, that all these good

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good Souls had miraculously special Revelations of their being in God's favour; It would *unmake* Miracles to make them *so Common*; especially, when there is no Necessity of it, there being Supernatural Causes enow to breed such Effects as would certainly inform them of the Condition they were in; and, were there nothing else, the Testimony of a good Conscience was able to do it alone, or to give them this Assuredness. Certainly, every good Christian holds that Good Intentions are Rewardable; and if they be Rewardable, it is undeniable that they are Pleasing to God; and, consequently, so must the Person be also who has these Good Intentions. If then sincere well-meaning Souls can know their own Intentions to be Good (which has been prov'd abundantly, they may, and, indeed, is a shame they should not) then they may know they please God, or that they are in his Favour.

II. Nor can it be alledged that a strong Hope is able to give them this perfect satisfaction at the hour of death: For, when the Concern is *Infinite*, as is
Eternal

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Eternal Salvation or Damnation, one of which Faith assures us will be due every Soul according to the Disposition she *dies in*, the least Thought that Suggests to their *Fearful* Apprehensions, at that Decretory Season, that *perhaps* they are not at that present so well dispos'd as to be in God's favour, would be exceedingly *Terrifying*; & render that *heartly Resignation* which all Christians ought to have when they come to die, *very feeble*; for what Man, who considers what he says, can *heartily resign* his Soul to the *least hazard* of remaining for all Eternity in Hell-Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels who are to be his Companions for ever in that Spiritually-dark Dungeon. No doubt then but our Good God has laid Means to assure all-meaning Christians who *are not* Conscious to themselves of *Bad Intentions* and *Mortal Impurities*, nay who *are* Conscious to themselves that they *hate* such Wickedness that they are truly *Sons of God*, and in his *Favour*.

12. A Seventh Argument may be drawn from the Words of the Blessed

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Apostle St. Paul, (*Rom. 8. v. 15. 16.*) where, after he had told them that the Spirit of Christianity was not that of slavish fear, (which I desire all Christian Readers, as is their Special Duty, particularly to note) but that of *Children*, or *Adopted Sons*, thro' which we cry *Abba Father*; that is, thro' which we look upon God, and apply to him with the same *Loving Affection* and *Humble Confidence* with which Children apply to their Father in all Necessities; he adds, [*For the Spirit bears Testimony to our Spirit, that we are the Sons of God.*] Note here, first, that, whatever different Interpretations, as to *some* of these words, the many-minded Commentatours may put upon this Text; yet, this is evident beyond all Cavil, that there is something which he calls [*the Spirit*] which *testifies* to us we are the *Sons of G O D*, that is, in the *State of Grace*: Nor can it be deny'd but that this Testimony is *most certain*; that is, *perfectly convictive* to us that we are so; for what is a Testimony good for, if it does not *convince* the Persons to whom it testifies. Note, secondly, L that

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that he speaks this to the Romans in *General*, or in *Common*; and, consequently, to the *whole Body* of the Roman Church of that time, (at least to all those of the Layity who were *good Christians*,) and not to the *Learned*, or to *Priests* and great *Contemplatives* only; which two Points granted, establish all my present Position. Now, what *Spirit* can this be that *bears this Testimony*, or gives this *perfect Assurance* to us that we are the *Sons of God*, or in his *Grace and Favour*? It is evident from the *Antithesis*, except in the words to [*Our Spirit*] that 'tis some *other Spirit*, and not *our Own*: What *Spirit* then, I say, can it be but the *Holy Ghost*? who, possessing our Hearts by *Divine Love*, his proper Gift, or which is the same, by his *Sanctifying Grace*, does make *Our Spirit*, or *Understanding*, know assuredly that such a *constant Tendency* of our Soul to Heaven, and such a *continued Course* of Christian Actions as proceed from us, cannot possibly be refunded into any *other Cause* but his *Divine Influence*, and his *Inhabitation* or *dwelling in us*.

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13. Wherefore, *as long as*, or *while* those good Souls *continue* their exercise of Prayer, and find their Heart *elevated* towards Heaven; while they find they do heartily and constantly *desire, intend,* and *resolve* to do nothing that is contrary to God's Holy *Commandments*: While they find they are still troubled, and heartily *sorry*, when they have admitted even any *venial* Frailty which may, to some Degree, be *displeasing* to his Divine Majesty: while they *sincerely* *accuse* themselves of them, and make means to be *absolved* from them: While they *examin* their *Conscience* in order to purifie their Hearts from such *lesser* Blemishes; while they still *resist* *Temptations*, and endeavour to bear up *against* the Assaults of their Ghostly Enemies; while they are *concerned* for their Distractions in Prayer, or, if they find them insuperable, do *continue* still that Devout Exercise, and humbly acknowledge they are unworthy of more *special* Comforts at their Devotions; while they *prepare* themselves carefully to come to the *Sacraments*, that they may *cleanse* their Souls better from any

Taint of *Sin*, as far as their weak endeavours shall (by *God's* assisting Grace) enable them; while they strive to mortify in themselves any prevalent Passions, which they fear may endanger to by-*ass* their Wills from *God's* most Pure and Immaculate Law; while they read the *Holy Scripture*, or the *Lives* of *Saints*, not out of vain Curiosity, but with Intention to instruct themselves by the *Precepts* of the Former, and improve their Souls in Piety by imitating the holy *Examples* of the Later: while they pray heartily for the Virtues they find they want, (which implies they have them already in their Will) and exercise devout Acts of *Faith*, *Hope*, and *Charity*; while they dutifully observe the Commands and Discipline of the *Church*, (which puts them forwards in these Exercises) and obey their lawful Pastours; while, I say, they do constantly perform these and such like Duties; with a sincere Intention to improve themselves in *Virtue*; so long they may assure themselves that the Spirit of true *Charity*, or *God's* sanctifying Grace is in them; or, which is

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the same, that they are in the *State of Grace*. Such *Effects* (much less such *continu'd* ones) cannot proceed from *Corrupt Nature*, to the grain of which they are *Diametrically Opposit*. We may as well say that *Heat* produces *Cold*, or that *Darkness* causes *Light*, as say that such *Holy Actions* do spring from that which has a perfect *Aversion* against them. Since then all these, and a hundred other such like *Effects*, must spring from *some* cause, and that *Original Sin* cannot be *that Cause*, but some other *Efficient* which is of an *Opposit Nature*; nor can any thing be so properly and *directly Opposit* to *Corrupt Nature* and *Sin*, as *God's Divine Grace*, which was intended to curb, cross, and cure its Malignity; such good Souls, may, notwithstanding their Venial Infirmities into which they now and then slide, assure themselves, with all humble Thanks to the Blessed Donour, that he has out of his Goodness and Mercy vouchsafed to bestow upon them his *best Gift*, next to that of *Glory*, viz. *Divine Charity*, or *Love of God above all things*; and that they are consequently in the *State of Grace*. L 3 14.

14. Ere I leave this Point of our being God's Song under the Law of Grace, I desire the Christian Reader to reflect on the different Language in use, nay, commanded to be us'd in Christianity, from that which the Jews us'd in the Law of *Moses*, when they address'd to God in their Prayers. We shall find that the later look'd upon him as a *Terrible* and *Great* Person; they rehearsed all his *Wondrous Works*, and us'd such Expressions as related to his Greatness; such as were his stupendous Miracles in delivering them from their Enemies, giving them Victories, or punishing them severely for their Sins. This, I say, was the Language of the Generality then, and only some very few, who were specially illuminated, us'd any other words than such as might excite them to a dreadful Terrour of his Name. But now, in the Law of Grace, the very first words which we are commanded by our Blessed Saviour to use when we address our Prayers to God, are [*Our Father*;] which alone is sufficient to demonstrate to those who will but consider the Meaning of

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those Words, and believe our Saviour, that our Condition (and consequently, our Spirit) under the Law of Grace is that of *Adopted Sons*. Consonant to this, the words in fashion under the *Old Law*, were *The Lord, The Lord*, at every turn; but under the *New Law*, our Creed uses the words [Jesus Christ his only Son, *Our Lord*;] and in close of all our Prayers, we repeat still the same *Appropriating Expression*. Nor does the word [Lord] in such passages signifie a rigid, severe and *angry Master*, but a *Merciful Redeemer*; and that, he having *bought* us out of the Slavery of Hell, & paid our Ransom, we are by just Title, *His*; yet not so as that he has only brought us out of *one Slavery*, to put us into *another*; (for there is no *Slavery* to a Soul but *Sin*) but that, when He freed us from the *Devil's Thraldom*, he did, by doing so, bring us into the *Glorious Liberty of the Sons of God*; and to *serve* him, *cui servire Regnare est, to serve whom is to Reign*. Let us then revere and fear his Omnipotency, and from our Hearts acknowledge it to be as Infinit as the Jews could

think or imagin; but, let our Consideration of his *Goodness*, so wonderfully extended to us, since his only Son, our Saviour, wrought our Reconciliation, appeas'd his Anger, and satisfied his Justice, *soften* and *sweeten* the frightful Dread which the Jews had of him, because they wanted those incomparable Motives of his *Love*, which Christians have now. Whence I cannot but inform all well-meaning Christians who are capable of understanding those Motives, that if their Fear of GOD's *Infinite Greatness* exceeds their *Love* of his *Goodness*, they injure their State of *Christianity*, by declining from, and quitting the Advantages which the Law of Grace so liberally affords them; and reduce themselves preposterously to the Servile Condition, or Spirit of the *Jews*; and therefore I must say to them what our Blessed Saviour, in a parallel case, said to his Disciples when they would have imitated *Elias*; *They know not what manner of Spirit they are of*. Well, may obstinate and careless Sinners be struck with *Horror* and *Fear* of GOD's Just Indignation;

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nation ; but, let all good-meaning devout Souls rest secure in the Goodness of their GOD, as King *David* exhorts them, *Psal. 69. Let those who seek GOD, (or endeavour to serve him) exult and rejoyce in him; let those who love thy Salvation, (that is those who have a due care of saving their Souls) say continually, Let our Lord be praised, who has vouchsaf'd to give us Grace to serve him.*

15. My next Argument shall be taken from the Judgment of the Church and her Pastours, in Absolving Penitents, and admitting them to be Partakers of the Holy Eucharist ; which they ought not to do, unless they verily judge they are worthy of it ; which they cannot be, unless they love GOD above all things, or be in the State of Grace. *Holy things* (says our Saviour) are not to be given to *Dogs* ; much less ought the *Holiest* of all to Wicked Sinners, who are *Limbs of the Devil* : Nor ought the Sacrament of Love, the Blessed Eucharist, without a high Sacrilege be given, or allow'd to those who prefer a Creature in their Affection before

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their dread *Lord* and *Creatour*, Blessed for evermore. It is possible, indeed, that *some* Penitents may be *Insincere* (tho' it has not often been heard of) and *palliate* their Sins by *concealing* them. It is possible also, that some of the Pastours may be too *Indulgent*, or *Ignorant* and *unable* to make a right *Judgment* of the Souls of their Penitents, tho' they had accus'd themselves never so *Ingenuously*: But, to think that *all*, or *most*, or any *considerable* part of the former were such Abominable *Hypocrites* as to tell a *Lie* to the Knower of Hearts, our Blessed Saviour himself, to whom principally they *confess* their Sins; or that *all*, or *most*, or any *Considerable* part of the Later were so *Unqualified*, or *Unable* to perform their proper Function which is (as *St. Paul* calls it) to *discern Mens Spirits*; or so Abominably *Sacrilegious*, as to *flatter* or *favour* them so unreasonably in such a *serious* and *Sacred* circumstance; is a very *wild conceit*, and to be *abhorr'd* by all sober *Christians*. And yet, unless either the one, or the other of these may be thought to *fail* so

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enormously of their most *Precise Duties*, it must be acknowledged and held by *all*, that the *sincere* and *Devout Penitent*, thus *absolv'd* by a *knowing* and *Impartial Confessarius*, is a worthy *Communicant*; which he cannot be unless he *loves G O D above all things*, or be in the *State of Grace*. But, to come nearer our main Point; those Penitents themselves, being *Conscious* of their own *Sincerity*, may, *even hence*, receive a *new* and *farther Confirmation*, that being thus *approv'd* of by the Pastours of the Church; and *their Sins*, according to our Saviour's Promise, being *forgiven* them in *his Words*, and *his Name* and *Authority*; they are *unquestionably* in his Favour, or in the *State of Grace*; over and above the Satisfaction which all our *former Motives* and *Arguments* have given them in this particular.

15. Against this Argument of mine, I have not heard or read of any Opposition, except only from one Divine of great note: (who, for the honour I bear him, shall be here nameless;) nor had he any better Reason to alledge against
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the Certainty which good Souls may have of their being Just (or in the State of Grace) by means of this Sacrament, but only this, that neither the Sacrament of Baptism (nor consequently of Absolution given in this Sacrament) have any force without the *Intention of the Minister*, which is an *Inward Act of the Heart*, no Man but the *Minister himself* can have such an Evidence of it, as to be able to swear it: Well then, reply, if a Man have such a Certainty of his being *Absolved* as to swear it, he may then be truly certain he is, when absolv'd, in the State of Grace; so that the whole stress of this Objection rests upon the firmness of this School-Opinion, that no Sacrament has its *Effect*, unless, the *Person* who administers it does really intend it should have that Effect; which puts the Salvation of Multitudes of good *Christians* in the Goodwill and Pleasure of any *Wicked Man*. Two things at present, I have to say against the most unwarrantable Opinion: The first is, that the foresaid Learned H

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Historian of the Acts of the Tridentine Council (Part 1. p. 771.) relates that the Catholick Doctors only excepted against the Ministers doing the external Action *ludicrously, jestingly, or in mockery*, (which Luther held to be sufficient) and only required he should do it *with that Exterieur Seriousness which the Church uses, and with an Appearance to direct it to that End, to which the Church directs it*; and that while the Minister does it thus, the Contrary Will which he has intercurly, does not at all prejudice the Validity (or Effect) of the Sacrament. To apply this to our Point; Since our Eyes and Ears do testify that the Priest who administers the Sacrament of Penitence, does absolve us with an Appearance of that *External Seriousness*, that every Man, who sees, or hears him, would judge him to be *in earnest*, and that one may safely swear what his *Senses testify*; and, on the other side, since all that this Divine could object against our late Argument was the *Invisible Intention* of the Minister hindering us from knowing
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we are absolv'd, which (as is here shown) is a great *Error*, and against the Sense of that Council; it is manifest that this Argument stands in its full force, and that the Devout Faithful Christian may, even hence, know assuredly he is at that season in the State of Grace: I say once more, 'tis against *the Sense of the Council*; for, since the Council referred it to the Consideration of the Divines, and they brought in their Verdict in the manner here related, and it passed without any Controul or Dislike of the Fathers; 'tis very obvious to judge that the Council it self *lik'd* their determination, or was of the *same Sentiment*. The second thing I have to say against this Opinion is, that, besides that it makes all the most comfortable Concerns of Christians *Uncertain*; it makes it also impossible to be maintain'd that Christ has at this time any *Visible Church* on Earth; for, since a *Visible Church* cannot be without *Visible Bishops* and *Priests*, and their being such depends on the Intention of those who *ordain'd* them; which

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which Intention (according to this Opinion) is *Invisible*: 'Tis impossible if this Opinion be true, for any man to know himself, or *make known*, or prove to others, that there is any *Visible* Church of Christ in the whole world. Of how pernicious and dangerous Consequence such a Principle is, let all sober Christians judge.

16. I remember also how the same Cardinal relates that in the Council of Trent, when that question was there agitated what was to be held a *sufficient Disposition* to go to the Sacrament of Penitence; some of the Spanish Bishops were of Opinion, that not only *Contrition*, but *Perfect Contrition*, was *Necessary*. Now, I believe all solid Christians hold that *Perfect Contrition* (which includes an Intention of doing all other requisite Duties) does take away *all Sins* whatsoever; which *most certainly* puts those Souls, thus penitent, in the *State of Grace*: Wherefore, if *Perfect Contrition* were judg'd by some in the Council, *Necessary* for the Sacrament of *Penitence*, which is but a *leading Preparation* for the receiving the *Holy Eucharist*,
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we may with reason judge that not only *those* Holy Bishops, but all the whole Council, would *a fortiori*, or much more, judge that to receive the *Eucharist* itself, True Perfect Contrition (which includes the *Love of God above all things*) must be requisite; which could not be thought without holding that all those who (*clave non errante*, or legally) were thus *absolv'd* and *admitted* to that Holiest Sacrament of *Love*, were, in their Judgment, to be look'd upon as in the *State of Grace*.

22. To close this Discourse; I cannot think but that every sincere Soul which *intends well*, and, when the Man comes to die, has that Disposition in her, which we call [*the Testimony of a good Conscience*,] if it be not frightened with misapprehensions instill'd into her by Education, will be perfectly satisfied that he dies in GOD's favour. 'Tis a kind of a Natural Consequence that he into whose hands we are to come, if we *mean well*, and that we hold him to be Good, and to *know our hearts* and that our Intention is *Good*, will *deal well* with us: Even *Socrates* the

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Heathen Philosopher, tho' the knowledge of the *true* GOD was not *revealed* to him, yet had, even by the Law of *Nature* or *Right Reason*, a most *firm Confidence* it should be well with him *after Death*, because he was *Conscious* he had liv'd according to the Rules of *Virtue*; and (as he told his Friends a little before his Death) was certain that the Governour of the World was *Just* and *Good*. Which Hope took such full hold of his Reason and Judgment, that scarce any Man could die more *resignedly*, or with more *assuredness* and *Comfort*; as *Plato*, his Schollar, has testified in his *Phædo*. Which being so, it does not seem *Edifying*, but even *Scandalous*, that well-meaning Christians who are *Conscious* to themselves of their own *Good Intentions* and *Virtuous Actions* in the Service of GOD, and have ten thousand times *greater* Motives to *hope* and *trust* in him than had *Socrates*, should have a *worse* opinion of his *Infinite Goodness*, so many prodigious ways manifested to us, than had a *meer Philosopher*.

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DISCOURSE XII.

Objections against the Foregoing
Doctrine Answered.

1. **O**bjection 1st. It will perhaps be objected that this Doctrine is against the Sense of (at least) *some* of the Bishops in the Council of *Trent*. I answer, that this Position of ours was never *agitated*, not so much as *touch'd upon*, nor (as far as appears) ever *thought of* by any one Person in that Council; much less was it *condemn'd* by the Council *it self*, where nothing was *Decreed* till after deliberate and accurate Discussion. This is evident from that most *Exact History* of that Council writ by Cardinal *Pallavicino*, Book 8. Chap. 12. in which, and no where else, the *Certainty* of knowing whether a Person be in the *State of Grace*, was treated of. The Title of the Chapter is this, [A

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Disputation of the Certainty of Faith, which may be had in this Life of our being in the State of Grace; where the words [*Certainty of Faith*] are specially to be remark'd; for about *that* kind of Certainty, and *no other* (as may be seen by the whole Tenour of that Dispute) their Disquisition was wholly employed. Whence it came that *Catarinus*, a Father of great esteem in the Council, distinguish'd this *Certainty of Faith* into two sorts; Certainty by *Catholick* or *Universal Faith*; and Certainty by *Particular*, or *Private Faith*. About which, and some other Opinions, there were diverse Scholastick Discourses; to meddle with which is not pertinent to my purpose at present.

2. To understand from the very bottom, the occasion of this Disputation, I am to acquaint the Judicious Reader that it was the Doctrine of *Luther* (against whom the Declaration of the Council was solely and directly levell'd) that *all* Christians are *only* justify'd by a firm and strong Faith, laying fast hold on the *Merits of Christ*; and that all those who were

were thus justify'd, had withal Certainty of *Faith* that they were *Just*, or in the *State of Grace*, by the *same Means*: Nor only so, but he maintain'd, moreover, (as this learned Author well notes) that they ought to believe they were *thus justify'd*; this Belief, according to *Luther*, being inseparably joyn'd to their Christianity: And 'tis against those most absurd and senseless Positions, and *them only*, that this Council directly pointed all its Decrees which concern'd this Subject; as is most evident from many express places in the Chapter now cited.

3. From whence may be seen manifestly how vastly our Tenet differs from that of *Luther*; and, consequently, how far the Council was from declaring against it, or in the least disapproving of it: For, we neither affirm that we may know our selves to be in God's Grace by any kind of Faith; nor that we must necessarily have Certainty of this any way, but only that we may have it; nor that all true Christians must or may have

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this Certainty, but only *some*, viz. those sincere Souls who are *Recti Corde*, *Right in Heart*; or such as are *careful of their Salvation*, and constantly live a Pious Christian Life: Much less do we say that it is a Main Point of Christianity to believe by a firm Faith that we are in God's Favour; all which Ridiculous Positions that bare-brain'd Man advanced as the *Fundamentals* of his new fangl'd Religion, and are *all* of them *deny'd* by us as *Contrary* to Catholick Faith: So that there is not the least shadow of reason to object that the Council *disapprov'd*, *meddled with*, or *thought of* our present Tenet.

4. But, this is not all, there is more over Another *Main* and most Fundamental Difference between the *Lutherans* and *Us*, which I thus lay open. *Luthers* Scheme of Doctrine, as to *Justification* and *Christian Morality*, was to deny any *Inherent Justice*, even in the greatest Saints: He utterly renounced all *Good Works*, as good for nothing, even tho' done through God's Grace, since they did not (as he

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he held) at all avail to make us *Interiourly* either *Better* or *Worse*, or more Gracious in God's Sight; but (as was shown) made all our Christian Morality solely depend on mere *Faith*, laying hold on *Christ's Merits*, and consequently, that only by *that Faith* we were justify'd, and (to come nearer our Point) that only by having *that Faith*, we could have any *Certainty* that we were Just, or in God's Favour: Whereas, on the quite contrary, the *Certainty* of our being in God's Grace which we maintain is wholly built on our Conscience of our *Good Intentions* to keep God's holy Commandments, and our endeavouring so to do; and, in the main, on our doing such *Good Works* as God has enjoyn'd us; and this in such a *constant Tenour* as cannot be judged us to proceed from any other Principle; but from God's *Sanctifying Grace* which is *Inherent* in our Hearts, or (to quote St. Paul's words, *Rom. 8. v. 11.*) *his Spirit dwelling in us*; which Ground is so point-blank opposite to *Luther's* that he cou'd not pretend to it without it,

without denying all his Fundamental Doctrines in this particular Point; so that the Falseness of his Tenet seems in some sort a new Argument for the Truth of Ours.

5. Second Objection. It may be objected, secondly, that the Council, tho' not in its Canons, yet in the 9th. Chapter of the Preliminaries to them says expressly, *Non asserendum est oportere eos, &c.* It is not to be affirm'd that those who are truly justify'd, must necessarily without doubt make account that they are justify'd; which seems directly against this Position of mine. To answer, first, that tho' that manner of Certainty here maintain'd, had been there meant or spoken of (as it has been prov'd it was not in the contrast) yet this Objection wou'd not touch the Doctrine here deliver'd; for the word [*oportere*] signifies it is needful or necessary; which is contrary to our Tenet; which pretends not that good Souls must have any Ground of Certainty at all of their Being Just, much less that they cannot be saved without it, as Luther held; but only that they

they may have it; and that, when
had, it conduces to advance their
Hope, and, by means of it, their
Charity. Secondly, what I insist up-
 on is, that this whole Chapter is di-
 rectly intended against *Luther*, who
 (as has been shown) never held, nor
 cou'd by his wicked Principles hold,
 any Certainty grounded on *Good Works*,
 seeing he held there were no Works
 that are *Good*: Hence he deny'd and
 rejected *St. James's* Epistle from being
 any part of Scripture; nay, revild it too,
 calling it *Straminea*, *Strawy*, or scarce
 worth a *Straw*: Hence he took the
 impudence to say, *What have we to*
do with Moses or the Law, that is,
with the Ten Commandments? So that
 who ever objects any Words in this
 Chapter to our Position, does mani-
 festly go against the *Intention* of the
 Council. Thirdly, the same appears
 by divers places in the said History
 of the Council, where it is expressly
 declar'd that they intended there only
 to oppose *Luther*. Fourthly, the same
 appears by the *Title* of this very 9th
 Chapter objected, which is *Contra in-*

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anem Hæreticorum Fiduciam; Against the vain Confidence of Hereticks: For, indeed, nothing can be more vain than to build all their Hope and Reliance on a *Fantastick Faith* that they are justify'd, tho' they are not conscious to themselves that they have done any good Works at all, (which are the proper Fruits and Effects of *Sanctifying Grace*) to breed in them such an Apprehension. Fifthly, the same is manifest by the *Close* of this Chapter, which refers to the Contents of it precedent, and gives the *Reason* of all that went before, viz. *Cum nullus scire valeat Certitudine Fidei, cui non pot. est subesse falsum, se Gratiam Dei esse consecutum*; Seeing no man can know with the Certainty of such a Faith as cannot be false, (that is, by Catholick Faith,) that he has obtain'd the Grace of God. Lastly, the same is manifest by the 14th. Canon to which this Chapter relates, and which is directly level'd against the *Lutheran Tene*, in which the Emphatical word [*Believe*] is constantly made use of; so that nothing can be more groundless, or can more pervert the Intention of

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the Council, than to pretend it so much as glances upon our present Position; Rather, since the Council *only* opposes the *Believing* this with *such a Faith*; it does, by consequence, tacitly allow *any other way* whatever of knowing we are in GOD's Favour, as *free from Cen- sure*; which rather abets our Tenet, at least clears it from contradicting their Sentiment.

6. Third Objection. It is expressly said in the Holy Scripture, (*Ecclesiastes Chap. 9. ver. 1.*) that *No Man knows whether he is worthy of Love or Hatred*. This Text has been frequently alledg'd by many Writers of Spiritual Matters, and past current as a kind of *Maxim*, and is in the mouth of every humble devout Person when they have Occasion to speak of that Subject; and yet is directly contradicted by this new Doctrine, I answer, 'tis confess'd that these words have been commonly taken in the sense of the Objecter; and that I am very sorry to see an Errour, in such a concerning Point, grown so *current* and *universal*; and I am much sorer that Circumstances should light so

as to oblige me in Duty to lay open a *Mistake* which has got so much Credit by its general Vogue: I am very sensible upon how invidious a Task it puts me, and how it may be lookt upon as a strange piece of *Singularity* to contradict the common Sentiment of so many Learned and Pious Men. I do assure my Reader I am not *fond* of such a Censure: But, if I see plainly that that Text is clearly *misunderstood*; and that, considering the Circumstance I am in, a *force* is laid upon me to shew it is so; I do not see how, either in the Duty I owe to *Truth*, and to my own Justification, or even in *Charity* to my Neighbour, I can decline the rectifying those well-meaning Mistakers. Perhaps too, there is another Reason very cogent why I shou'd do this, which is, that I fear the *misinterpreting* this Place, and (as it often happens) the taking it *one from another* without carefully examining it, is that which gave occasion to the contrary Opinion; which renders my undeceiving others more necessary. Nor ought I to be at all deterr'd by the *Universality* of the Mistake; rather, if

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I see it is an *Error*, the *Obligation* is more pressing, and the *Charity* more generous, to endeavour to rectify it. The Holy and Learned *St. Thomas of Aquin* having laid it for a Christian Maxim for all in my Circumstances, that *Nullum Scandalum relinquenda est Defensio Veritatis*; The Defence of Truth is not to be relinquish'd for any Scandal whatever.

7. The Case then rightly stated is this: Others understand this Text to mean, that No Man knows whether himself is worthy of Love or Hatred: On the contrary, I judge, that 'tis impossible it thou'd bear that Sense; and that the true Sense of it is this, that Other Men do not know whether a Man that is Just be truly and indeed such, and so worthy of Love or Hatred. To decide this, we will take the *Intire* place, out of which these words are hastily pick'd and cited singly, as if there were not any other, or any more, in the same Context which were proper and necessary to give us their true Meaning: It is this, There are Just and Wise Men, and their works are in the Hands of God,

and

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& yet Man does not know whether he is wor-
 thy of Love or Hatred; because all things
 do indifferently happen to the Just, and to
 the Wicked; to the Good, and to the Bad;
 to him that offers sacrifices; & to him that
 contemns them: As is the good Man,
 so is the Sinner; as is the Perjur'd, so is
 he that swears Truth: Where the Con-
 text taken intirely does evidently amount
 to this Discourse. "There are Just
 "Men, and their Works are in God's
 "hand, who does not discover to us
 "Men, by the course of his ordinary
 "Providence in this World, whether
 "they are Just or no; but reserves the
 "Manifestation of their Inward Vir-
 "tues till his future Judgment, so that
 "*Nescit Homo, Man does not know whe-*
 "*ther they are Just or no; because he*
 "orders the same Temporal Prosperi-
 "ty and Adversity (by which the Gene-
 "rality of the Jews us'd to judge of
 "GOD's Favour, or Disfavour, of his
 "Love or Hatred) should happen in-
 "differently, and without any Distincti-
 "on to the Good, and to the Bad;
 "or (as our Blessed Saviour expres-
 "ses it, *Mat. 5. ver. 45.*) *He makes*
"his

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"his Sun rise upon the Good, and the Bad
 "and his Rain fall upon the Just and
 "Unjust.

8. Observe here in the Text, the Antithesis, or Opposition between [GOD] and [Man] and how 'tis said that GOD reserves the knowledge of it for the future, (when the Consciences of all Men shall be laid open to all the World) and Man (which signifies all Mankind) knows it not; for none of us can know another's heart but the Spirit of Man which is in him.

8. But that which makes it impossible the Text should bear the sense which is commonly given, is the latter part of the Sentence which was not at all minded, but omitted by those Misinterpreters, tho' it renders the Reason of the immediately foregoing words; which is the very best means imaginable to clear the Sense. For what a prodigious consequence is this; A Man knows not whether himself be worthy of Love or Hatred; that is, whether he be Good or Bad, because the same Events light to both.

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As if *Men* had no *Syndereſis* or Conſcience at all, nor any better light to judge of their own Interiour, but their Good or Bad Fortune in this World: A Poſition both contrary to Faith, Reaſon and Common Senſe. St. *Paul* aſſures us that the very *Heathens* had the *Law of Nature writ in their Hearts*; and that, according to that Law, their Thoughts accus'd, or excus'd one another; And, had not the *Jews*, in *Solo-*
mon's time, the *Ten Commandments*; which were to them the *Teſt* whether they were Good or Bad, according as they kept or broke them? And is it poſſible they ſhould not know whether they did ſo or no? Indeed, others (or the Generality) might not know this for ſome time, becauſe Good Men hide their Virtues out of *Humility*, and Bad Men cloak their faults out of *Hypocriſie*; but, 'tis the higheſt Nonſence to ſay that *themſelves* did not know ſo many mat-
 ters of Fact (eſpecially ſuch in which themſelves are ſo nearly concern'd) as belong to the breaking or keeping the *Commandments*. The abſurdity of this will better appear, if to the words worthy

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of *Love or Hatred*] we run on (as we may in reason) in the same Equivalent Instances which are given us in the Text, *viz. Good or Bad, Clean or Unclean, Offering Sacrifice, or Slighting them; Perjur'd, or not Perjur'd;* which done, if in the first of them it means that the Man *himself* cannot know whether *himself* be worthy of "Love or Hatred, because the like "Events light to such and such; then "it must, by consequence, be pre- "tended hence that no Man *knows*, whe- "ther himself *offers Sacrifices*, or con- "demns them: No Man can tell whether "himself is *perjur'd* or no; because if "he knows these, he may easily know "whether himself is *worthy of Love or "Hatred*: Which assertion is opposit to Common Sense, and the plain experience we have of our own Actions. From Heathens and Jews let us draw nearer our Point, and come to *Christians*: Do not *these* know whether themselves are *Virtuous* or *Vicious*; that is, *Worthy of Love or Hatred*, but only by that *Crooked* and most Uncertain Rule of *Outward Events* happen-
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ing to them? Is it not as evident as Noon-day, that they constantly make a *Judgment* of their Interiour, by reflecting whether they have follow'd or *swerv'd* from *CHRIST's* Law:

9. I could bring more Arguments out of the Text to shew it is nothing at all to the purpose for which it has been heretofore alledg'd, but that I think it cannot need. The Sum is, the Mistake of the true Meaning of it springs chiefly from the citing it *imperfectly*, and abruptly *breaking it off* when the *reason* of the foregoing words came to be alledg'd, which were of *greatest* force to give us their *true Sense*. Perhaps too, the Grammatical consideration of the *Enallage Numeri*, or Passing from the Plural Number to the Singular, might help to breed the mistake in some Readers who reflect not that the Sacred Writers, attentive to their *Sense*, do not always tie themselves up to Grammatical Niceties, but oft times neglect them; as might be shown in many instances, and even in this Chapter there is *another* place, something like this. 'Tis a

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abundantly sufficient for our purpose to have shown evidently that the words, insisted upon, cannot possibly, in that *Place*, bear the Sense the Objecters pretend, whatever they might signifie, if taken alone, as they took them. I have been longer in this particular, because I apprehend that this *Imperfect Text* thus *misunderstood*, and the frequent use of it, while one Writer took it from another upon *Trust*, and without *Examination* (as it too commonly happens) were a Great, if not a Chief Reason which gave this Sense a Currency, and why the Contrary Opinion is grown so Common.

10. Fourth Objection. However the Explication given here may make this contrary Sense *more Probable*, yet, it cannot be excused from *Singularity* and *Temerity* that *One Man* should oppose such *Multitudes* who have thought this Sense to be Certain. *Answ.* This Objection is in it self of most pernicious consequence in its Tendency; tho' Charity obliges me to judge it proceeded from a *Pious Zeal* in the Objecters. For, by this account, no *Vulgar Error* must

must ever be rectify'd, but permitted to *run on* till the Day of Judgment. For, since it is impossible that *many* should, at the self same time, light to have the *same* Thoughts to see it; much less that *any* Multitude should take up the same Resolution to *set* themselves first to *discover* it; the stopping the Currency of it must necessarily *begin* from *some One Man*; or else *Falshood* must still obtain Credit amongst Good Men, and *draw after it*, by Consequence, *other Errors* that are connected with it; which cannot fail of producing *ill Effects*, when reduc'd to *practice*. Nor is this opposing the stream of Writers to be call'd a *Novelty*, till it be prov'd *false*; for, if it be a *Truth*, tis as *Antient* as the *Author* of *all Truth*, God himself, and was in his Divine Understanding, in which every Truth is, *from all Eternity*.

11. To keep the Minds of well-meaning *Vulgar* Readers from being startled or scandalized at the Name of a *Novelty*, I think it not amiss to instance to them in some Tenets far more Universal than this which I here oppose, and
which

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which are of much greater weight, and also were more strongly abetted; which yet have been oppos'd, left off, beat down, and some of them condemned by the whole Christian World. Those most Antient Fathers of the Church, and great Saints, *St. Irenaeus*, and *St. Justin Martyr*, and many others with them, held the Opinion that *Christ* was to come again upon *Earth*, and reign here in great Splendour with his Saints. This was then so generally held, and this Opinion so in Vogue, that *St. Hierom* is said to have been half afraid to write against it; tho' he did so for all that. That stout Champion for Truth, being a Man of more Courage than to let *Errors* settle, because they were grown *Vulgar*. Yet, for all this Curcency, for some time, it was condemned afterwards for a Heresy. One *Papias*, a Disciple of *St. John* the Evangelist, who being a very weak Man, misunderstood that Seraphick Saint, who spoke in a Spiritual Sense, being the only Man who related it first. Again, In the second Nicene Council, *John Bp. of Thessalonica*, affirm'd that the Angels had

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had *thin Bodies made of Air or Fire*, and that this was the Opinion of the Church; nay, that the Council *lik'd* that opinion. But they *defin'd* it not, nor held it going upon their Rule of Faith, Tradition; but as proceeding on the Principles of *Philosophy*, which, at that time, were not very wise ones. In St. *Austin's* days, and 'tis generally thought for 600 Years together, the Eucharist was usually given to *Children*, even very *little Ones*, out of an opinion that it was necessary for their Salvation; grounding their Sentiment upon those words, *John 6. Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, you have no Life in you.* Yet not one Man does it *now*, nor holds it *ought to be done*. Upon these particulars, to take of all Umbrage from weak People, I make these Remarks. First, that *none* of these Errours were ever *defin'd* by the Catholick Church, nor held by the Faithful upon the account of the Rule of Faith, *Universal Tradition*; nor, consequently, were any of them *received* as of Faith, but upon other *slighter* Grounds now mentioned. 2dly. That, hence

hence may be seen how dangerous it is to give much credit to private *Hear-say*, or to private *Interpretations* of Scripture, even tho' made by great Men; nor to be too Zealous in defending such Positions; nor to give too much *Credulity* to any Tenets which are slightly grounded; or to any Man, decrying others who deny them, for Hereticks; unless it be prov'd that what they hold is a Point of *Faith*, descended from *Christ* and his Apostles by her said *Rule*, upon which the Church proceeds when she *defines* any thing to be of *Faith*; lest they wrong *Truth*, *Charity*, and their own *Conscience*. 3dly. To come nearer our present business, the Tenet we oppose, is of far less Weight; nor is it so *Universally* held as were the three we did now instance in. Nor is it *pretended* that our Position is contrary to what descended from *CHRIST* and his Apostles; nor is it, as was shown, condemned by any Council; nor is the contrary Tenet abetted by any thing (at least chiefly) but by a *Private Interpretation* of a Text of Scripture strangely *misunderstood*, which is

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too weak a foundation to build even an *opinion* upon. Lastly, the three Errors now mentioned, they being now *utterly rejected* by the whole Church, could not have been discarded but by *opposing* them, nor could they be thus *oppos'd* (as was shown above) but the opposition must begin from some *one single Man*, who hap't to look *deeper* into the Point and the Grounds of it than *others* did. Nor could that *Singularity* or *Novelty*, in being the *first* that *oppos'd* those Errors, be *Opprobrious* to that *one Man*, since he detected and *oppos'd* an *Error*; but rather it ought in Justice be deem'd in him an Honest, Just and Generous Attempt, *per Infamiam & bonam famam* to oppose *Falshood*, and to defend and maintain what he saw to be an *Useful* and *Concerning Truth*; notwithstanding he foresaw he must expect Opposition even from very good and Holy Men. But, to return to the Objections.

12. Fifth Objection. St. Paul says (1 Cor. 4. v. 4.) *Nihil mihi Conscius sum, sed non in hoc justificatus sum: qui autem judicat me Dominus est: I am not*
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Conscious to my self of any thing, but I am not therefore justified, but he that judges me, is our Lord. Wherefore, if such a Holy Person as St. Paul, tho' not Conscious to himself of any thing, durst not say that himself was therefore *Justified*; how can o her good Christians be so, who are Conscious to themselves of *many* Infirmities? 'Tis answered 1st. that, to make this Text come up to our Point, it must be pretended that that Holy Apostle did not certainly know he was *just*, or which is the same, not in God's favour; that is, he did not know that he *loved God above all things*, but might perhaps be in the State of *Mortal Sin*: which is such a wild conceit as never entered into the Thought of any Christian. He that told the Generality of the Romans who were good Souls, that *the Spirit* (or the Holy Ghost) *bears Testimony to our Spirit we are the Sons of God*; had not he the same Testimony in *himself*? or was he only *excepted* when the Generality were admitted to have that Priviledge? He who (Rom. 8. v. 35.) asks boldly, *Quis nos separabit a Charitate Christi?*

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Who shall separate us from the Charity of CHRIST? and so goes on to the end of the Chapter, defying Hell, the Devils, the World, and all its Persecutions and Torments to do their worst, and declares, *ver. 38.* that he is *Certain* none of them can be able to do him that prejudice; does *he*, I say, doubt, or say he is *Uncertain* whether he is actually separated from it or no? 'Tis manifest then that St. Paul must either mean that he was *Certain* he was *Just* as to his performing the *Substance* of CHRIST's Law, (which is all we here contend for or require) tho' he was *Uncertain* as to the *utmost*, or *most Exact*, performance of it in *every* respect; of which kind of Justice we are far from saying any Man can have *Certainty*, no perhaps not St. Paul himself. Or else, he speaks there of the passing the *final Sentence* of Justification upon him by our Saviour when he should come to Judge the Quick and the Dead; as it may seem by the 3d. and 5th. Verse which go before, and follow the Text now cited, in the former of which he says, *I do not at all regard my being Judged by*

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you, aut ab Humano die, or by a day of Judgment, or Assizes, appointed or managed by *Man*; but that our Lord is to give Sentence upon him at the last day, and therefore he would not anticipate it, and pass Sentence upon himself; which yet may well consist with his knowing Certainly in *his own Private Interiour* that he was *Just*. A Person accused of a Crime may *Himself* know, and Interiorly judge before hand that he is *innocent* and *just*, without invading the *Judges Authority*, or taking his Office out of his hand who is to pronounce Sentence upon him in a solemn Manner in *Open Court*. To apply this to the Place objected; as the Word (*Justify'd*) when apply'd to our Saviour's judging us, signifies our being declar'd *Just* at the General Judgment at the Last Day; so when he said in the same Context, (*Neither do I judge myself, and I am not therefore justified*) but referr'd it to Christ's Judgment, it ought in good reason be meant of the same manner of *justifying*; nor is there any thing here that forbids our Judging in our own Interiour, by our experiencing

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encing that we perform substantially what God has commanded us, and avoid committing *Mortal Sins*, that our Actions are not displeasing to GOD, but that we are in his Favour.

13. Lastly, we do not say that Good Souls may be assur'd they are in the State of Grace, because they are not *Conscious to themselves of any thing*, (which were St. Paul's words) for they may be Conscious to themselves of divers *Venial* Imperfections, and yet be *substantially Just*; since every well-instructed Christian knows that none but *Mortal Sins* kill sanctifying Grace, or Love of God *above all things*, in the Soul: But we say, they may have this Assurance because they are *Conscious to themselves of their doing many good Deeds*, as also that they *constantly resist and reject all Temptations to Mortal Faults*; nay more, that they endeavour, by using the Means left by our Saviour in his Church, to purge and purify their Souls even from those that are only *Venial*. If then they can be certain that they do sincerely and constantly use their weak endea-

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vours to keep their Souls clean from these incomparably *Lesser* Faults, they may thence be well assur'd that their Will is strongly bent against the admitting any of the *Greater* and *Mortal* Impurities; and that, therefore, they are in the *State of Grace*.

14. These are the most pregnant, and the strongest Objections, that upon my Recollection I cou'd *imagin* or *invent* my self which might be alledg'd against this Doctrine; which I have *press'd* and *urg'd* to their full *Import*, and put forwards to their best Advantage. I doubt not but some few others may be pick'd out of the *Fathers*; and I as little doubt but that, if the Question be rightly stated, as it has been by me (*Dis. 10.*) they will fall short of reaching the true Point; and that, moreover, far *more* may be produced that favour our Opinion. The Holy Fathers of the Church in all their Homilies and Discourses spoke to the *Generality* of their Auditors, amongst whom they might well suppose there were multitudes who were *great sinners*; and there-

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therefore they accommodated their Sermons to such as they were; and not only to *devout* Christians of this particular Pitch of Sanctity, as are those *well-meaning* Souls, or those *Recti Corde*, who already *hate*, with all their heart, all *Mortal* Impurities; of which, and only of which, we here speak.

15. Were it necessary here to gather out the Scripture, especially out of K. *Davia's* Psalms, all such expressions as inferr'd that they knew they were in God's Favour, I should be too large and tedious. How could that Holy King, speaking to God himself, assert (as it were) his own Innocence? Or how could he call himself so often, and so confidently, God's *Servant*, if he did not *know* himself to be so? Or how could he *know* himself to be God's *Servant*, if he did not know withal he was in his Favour? For, certainly, if those who are his Servants be not in his Favour, those who are not his Servants could not be so; and so there would be none in the whole Church in the State of Grace; which would sute but very oddly with the Sanctity of the Church,

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Church, which we do all of us profess in our Creed. Or, did that King speak at *guess*, or hap-hazard, when he entitled himself so, or said more than he knew? which is both an over-weening Presumption, and withal a kind of *Untruth*. Or do good Christians when they read affectionately these words after him, speak false, or tell a Lye, to God's Face while they are praying to him? Or have they, when they say positively they are GOD's Servants, this secret meaning reserv'd and suppress'd, [*as I hope,*] or (*for ought I know?*) What a fraudulent and indirect way of Praying would this be? And what shall we think of Holy Job? The hand of GOD seem'd to be heavy upon him, and in such a signal manner, that perhaps some now-a-days Christian would be apt to think it was GOD's just Judgment upon him for some secret Sins of his: 'Tis certain his Friends that came to comfort and condole with him, (according to the common Conceit of those times) did verily judge it was so; and therefore pressed it upon him, and would have had him accuse him-

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himself to have brought it upon himself by his Wickedness: This Misery of his would have startled even a constant man; at least, would have made quavering Christians fear their Intentions, in all the good works they had done, were *bad*, and aim'd at a wrong End; especially if they were (as some call it) *Humble*; for tis with some a special piece of Humility to *think false*, or make a *Rash Judgment* of themselves; which, by the Order of Charity, is a worse Sin than to judge rashly of our Neighbours. But, what does holy Job in this case, or how does he behave himself in such a juncture as would make an ordinary Man's Courage quail? For all the godly Talk of his censorious Friends, (for they spake like meer Saints) he tells them plainly, *Far be it from me that I should judge you are Just*. They would have periwaded him to have given himself for Guilty, and he tells them flatly *Non recedam ab Innocentia mea donec deficiam*; *To my Death I will not depart from my Innocency*. His honest Heart was conscious to it self, he meant well, nor could he be bigotted

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ted by all their fine Discourses, nor be so terrify'd by all the prodigious Calamities which God had permitted to light on him, as to *betray* his own *Virtue*, *forgo* his own *Justification*, or *give up* his *Innocency*. He goes on, *I will not forsake my Justification, which I have begun to maintain, for my Heart has not reprehended me in my whole Life*. It seems then, in those days, well-meaning People might undoubtedly know their own *Intentions*, and whether they are *worthy of Love or Hatred*: And so might those who are *Right of Heart* do now also, but that there is a Sceptical Humor got into the World, by some peoples talking speculatively on both sides, and concluding nothing, that our very Nature-taught Notions are call'd in question; and he is accounted the Wit of the Times, who can bring self-evident things to *Doubt*, and all *Certainty* to meer *Probability* and *Uncertainty*.

16. The proper way of conducting such Souls as these, who are already got above the Precincts of Hell,

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to elevate and raise them still higher towards *Heav'n*, which is best done by the advancing their *Hope* and *Charity*; both which Divine Virtues nothing can more damp, or more retard their Progress in Christian Life, than the terrifying Doctrine which we here oppose *viz.* That they are not certain whether *any* thing they *do*, or *did* in their whole Lives, pleases God or *no*; which is such an uncomfortable and melancholy Conceit, that it is enough to *deter* any considerate Person, who is solicitous of his Salvation and of his Soul's Eternal Welfare, and endeavours to please God to his weak Power, from proceeding forwards in his Service with a *heart*y *Cheerfulness*: For how can he keep up his Courage to contest with all the Difficulties he is to meet with, to resist Temptations manfully, to be assiduous in his Devotions, to suffer loss of Friends and of Goods, to undergo (if need be) Martyrdom too, if he can have no Certainty whether *any* thing he *does* or *suffers* is *acceptable* to God or *not*? If he be ignorant of this, then (since there is no middle between

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serving *Christ* and *Belial*, between loving *God* above all things and loving a Creature better than him) he must remain all the while *Uncertain* whether he be in the state of *Salvation* or *Damnation*; or, whether he is an *Imp* of *Hell* and a *Slave* of the *Devil*, or a *Servant* of *God*; lastly, whether he be an *Object* of *GOD's* dreadful *Wrath*, or of his *Fatherly Love*.

16. And can any Man think our Good *God* ever intended his true *Servants* should live such an uncomfortable Life all the while they are in his service, and be subject to such a strange Discouragement to do their Duties? Add to this, that (as was said) all good well-meaning Christians, now under the Law of Grace, are *Sons* of *GOD*, and He their Heavenly Father. Let us consider then in how disconsolate a Condition a Son would be, even amongst us, who endeavours sincerely to please his Father, on whom he depends whether he shall be left a Beggar, nay chain'd to a Gally all his Life for his Debts, if he displeases him; or to be Heir to a rich Estate, in case he gains his Goodwill, if he should live still in Uncertainty whether he be

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in his Favour or no ; Would not this Father be look'd upon, by all Mankind- as the *worst-humor'd* and *most hard-heart-ed* Man living ? And can we think our Heavenly Father *more Cruel* than he ; as he would be, should he leave such Souls as do heartily *intend* and *desire* to serve & obey him, in such a *dreadful Suspence* as to their *Pleasing* or *Displeasing* him, on which depends their *Eternal Happiness* or *Misery* ?

TAKE Courage then, O all you dear Happy Souls, whom the Grace of your Heavenly Father has rais'd to this high Honour of being his Beloved Children : Acknowledge, with all Humility, that you are empty *Nothings* of your selves ; nay, that you are worse than Nothing, being, by reason of your Original Corruption, born liable to his just Wrath, and Heirs of Hell ; and that 'tis his meer Mercy thro' his only Son, our Saviour, which has exalted you unto this transcendent Dignity. Having sincerely perform'd this Duty of a most profound Humility, be gladly proud that the Great King of

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Heaven

Heaven and Earth has been pleas'd to vouchsafe you this Signal Favour; and with the Blessed Virgin, exult in God your Saviour; Bless and magnifie his Holy Name for this Undeserv'd Bounty, and show your Gratitude to him by making your best Use of that rich Talent he has given you. Prostrate your Souls before his Adorable Infinite Majesty, and tremble with an Awful, Reverential, and Filial Fear of displeasing so great a King, so Holy a God, and so Gracious and Good a Father; but yet so, that this does not deter you from that Love and Humble Confidence which a Child ought to have for a Dear Parent. You injure your Duty if your Love of Him for his Goodness, does not exceed the Dread you have of him for his Greatness. Your Faith and Reason both tell you that the former Attribute is equally Infinite at the Later; nay, that, notwithstanding Accidental Frailties, not the least Good Intention you have, nor the least Good Action you do out of that Good Intention, can pass unregarded by him, or unrewarded. Pray to him earnestly for a Continuance

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Continuance and Increase of his Grace. His unexhausted and diffusive Generosity will never be weary of Giving, if you be not weary of Asking, and of Disposing your selves to receive what his Exuberant Bounty stands ever ready to pour out upon you. Pray to him daily and fervently for farther Degrees of his Divine Favours; and let your careful and devout Endeavours co-operate and go along with his Gracious Assistance; resting fully assur'd that it will never leave you, if you do not leave it.

Give me leave, with Confidence, to say to you, who live under the Law of Grace, and are sincere Followers of that Law, what the Blessed St. Paul said to your Brethren the Primitive Romans, in the like case; You have not received the Spirit of Servitude (or Slavery) in Fear, but you have received the Spirit of Adoption of Sons, in which we cry Abba Father: For the Spirit himself (that is the Holy Ghost, who dwells in our Hearts by his proper Gift, Divine Love) bears Testimony to our Spirit that we are the Sons of God; Which being so well-

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testify'd a Truth, 'tis fit you should know and value your Glorious Relation of being the Adopted Sons of God; and scorn so to degenerate from your near Affinity with him, as to set your First Love, or even, willingly, any lesser Affection inordinately on any thing below Heaven, your proper Inheritance. Aspire still to that happy State: It will not be presumptuous, or wrong your Humility, to contemn whatever is below that most eminent Pitch of true Christian Nobility. From that Pinnacle of Honour look down with a secure and despising Eye on all the power and malice of Hell; and laugh at all those Ridiculous Trifles of Worldly Contents which the Tempter foolishly proposes, and would allure you to stoop too: View'd from that Supream height, in which Heavenly Grace has placed you, the very best of them will appear but as very small Atomes of Goodness and Content; so near Nothing, that those Aiery Bubbles, after a few years (which, when they are once past, do seem nothing too) will break and dissolve; and, like empty Phantoms or Shadows, vanish and disappear.

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appear. They resemble those fleeting Delights that please us in our sleep, when we dream of *Golden Mountains*; which, when we awake, leave us as empty and poor as we were before: Yet of such thin Shadows of Pleasure as these the Devil makes his choicest Baits; which are no more worth the Acceptance of the Adopted Children of the King of Heaven, than it would be to think to oblige or bribe a great Prince by offering him an Apple or a Plum.

Make a true Conceit of the Nature of your Soul, and of Spirituality: This will teach you how vastly every Spiritual Act, Good Intention, or Devout Prayer, transcends the Nature of Body, or Matter; the Rubbish, of which the whole World, we so much admire, is fram'd. The least new Degree of Virtue you gain is, in just estimation, more valuable than all this great Corruptible Mass, kneaded together of the four Elements; much more than those poor Pittances of it, those few momentary Goods, which the Devil furbishes up so finely in our Imagination, and would have us truck our Title of everlasting Bliss, and the Glorifying Sight of our Dear GOD, for such Insignificant Trumpery. Be sincere and

N 4 constant

constant in your Christian Duties; which being intended, by the unerring Orderer of Natural and Supernatural Causes, as the Proper Means to breed in your Soul Sanctifying Grace, or the Love of Heaven above all things, will bear (as was shown) a convincing Testimony to your Spirit, that you are most assuredly the Adopted Sons of GOD: For, who dares question the Truth of such a Voucher as the Holy Ghost, dwelling in your hearts by Grace, or doubt of his Testimony? O what a hearty, what an incredible Encouragement will this give you in your Progress towards Heaven! Being thus assured that you have this Divine Comforter residing spiritually in your Soul, it will erect your Hope, make you defy all Temptations, Crosses, and Persecutions whatever. Let not past Sins, tho' great ones, if perhaps you have formerly been guilty of any Enormous Faults, deter you: Remember the prayer of the Church on Tuesday in Pentecost, which tells you, Ipse (that is the Holy Spirit of Divine Love there pray'd for) est Remissio omnium Peccatorum; He is the Remission of all Sins. The very Nature of Heavenly Love is formally and diametrically

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irritically opposit to all Sinful Affections ; and expells it out of the Soul by the same necessary Consequence, as the brightest Light does the blackest Darkness: This is the most Compendious, and withal the Sweetest Way to attain to Happiness; and yet nothing makes the Kingdom of Heaven suffer a greater Violence, or enables us bitter to ravish it by Force: And, if the Power and Goodness of Heaven it self cannot hold out against the Assaults of this All-conquering Divine Love, never fear that the Malice of Hell can have any Power over it. Repose then your Soul securely on this Blessed Spirit, dwelling in your Hearts by Charity: Rely on his All-powerful Assistance: Resign all your Thoughts and Affections entirely to his Guidance: Comply with his Gracious Inspirations: Rest siccure that he will bring along with him the whole Train of his Sevenfold Gifts, and of those Blessed Fruits, mention'd Gal. 5. which do ever attend him: These will set you above Temptations; make you live contentedly here, by giving you that Interior Spirituat Peace which the World

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cannot give, even tho' you be surrounded by Worldly Crosses and Troubles. It will render your Passage through this Life safe, by ordering every step of it aright. It will make your Death resigned, pleasant and joyful; and, lastly, it will crown your short and faithful Labours here with the Enjoyment of all that is Good, nay of the inexhausted Source of Goodness it self. It will establish you in the Happiest State of a Glorious Immortality, and of never-fading, never-ending, and Soul-Satiating Full Felicity.

F I N I S.

Holy

Holy Intentions

*To be now and then repeated after
Prayers, with a full purpose to ob-
serve and put them in Practice;
or, when we examin our Consci-
ence in order to Confession.*

I Do intend and fully purpose, thro^t
God's Grace not to begin my Pray-
ers *hastily*, or without Due Pre-
paration; but I will take time to put
my self in God's *presence*, and to consi-
der to what an Infinit Majesty I am go-
ing to address my Petitions; and how
the whole Court of Heaven do, all the
while, *observe my behav. n.* and v. i.,
accordingly, *assist me with their Inter-
cession.*

I do intend and fully purpose, by the
help of God's Grace, to prevent Di-
stractions what I can; at least, never to
admit any *voluntarily*.

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I do intend, thro' God's *Grace*, when I am going to pray, to season my Soul with Faith, Hope and Charity; by believing fully that GOD is *truly* my Father; while I sincerely endeavour to serve him; by Trusting, without any *wavering* or *doubt*, in his *Goodness*; that, according to our Saviour's Promise, he will give all those *Good Gifts* to his Children, which they want and ask of him with Faith and Perseverance: and, by *Loving* him entirely, who is the Source of all Goodness *in himself*, and the Bountiful Bestower of all Good *upon us*, if we be but *dispos'd to receive* it.

I do intend and fully purpose, thro' God's *Grace*, not to spend those *precious* Seasons of *Sundays* and *Holy days*, set apart by God and his Church to raise my Soul more vigorously towards Heaven, in idle Games and Play; much less in those which are more apt to give Scandal, as in Cards or Dice; but to employ, at least, the greater part of them in Prayer, or reading Pious Books, and the rest in innocent and unblamable Conversation; or, if my state of Life

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Life *needs* and *requires* it, *some part* of it (Obligatory Devotions being perform'd) in decent Recreation; unless I fear it may give any Scandal to the Weakness of my Neighbour.

I do intend, thro' GOD's Grace, that, in my Conversation, I will not affect to talk of my Neighbour's *Faults*, especially if *private* and *scandalous*; nor, if they be *publickly* known, with any other Intention but to signify my *abhorrence* of *Vice*; also, that I will, at the same time, *pity* and *pray* for the Conversion and Amendment of those who are noted to be Guilty of such *Faults*.

I do intend, thro' GOD's Grace, not to *aggravate* the Failings of others, but Charitably to *excuse* them as far as Truth permits me, even tho' they had done some Offence to my self; nor will I take pleasure to hear them *ill spoken of*, or their due deserts *undervalu'd*. Much less will I give way to Groundless *Rash Judgments*, and *Censoriousness* of their Actions; but will, to my power, bear in mind, and observe our Blessed Saviour's *Golden Rule*, not to do to others what I would not they should do to me. I

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I do intend, thro' GOD's Grace, not to let *slip* out of my Memory those *Holy Inspirations* and *Good Resolutions*, which the Divine Goodness shall give me, while I am at my Prayers, receiving the Sacraments, or at other devout Seasons; but I will faithfully endeavour to *lay them up* in my mind, as so many precious Tokens and Pledges of his Love sent me by the *Holy Ghost*, and will comply with them to my weak power.

I do intend, by GOD's Grace, to fix in my mind this *Great* and *Sure Truth* that GOD is the *Entire Governour* of the World, even to the *least* Circumstance; and that all things happen by his Positive *Ordering* it, if it be *Good*; or by his *permitting* it, if it be *Ill*, that so he may make a Greater Good to the World arise out of the Defects of some of his Creatures: and that, therefore, I will thankfully ascribe all *Good* that happens to me to his meer Bounty; and will resignedly *suffer* those *ills* he permits, without repining at his Infinitely Wise Disposition; but, I will reflect what an inconsiderable *Atom* of the World

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I am; and how unmeasurable a *Pride* it is to expect that the *wisest* Course and Contrivance of the *Universe* should be ravell'd for my particular advantage.

I do intend, thro' GOD's Grace, that, since I am fully convinc'd I have no Good *from my self*; but that all whatever I have, *viz.* my *Essence*, my *Being*, my *Powers*, the *Determination* of those Powers to Act, and therefore all my *Actions* themselves, even to the least Circumstance, is given me *from above*; I will never hence forward consent to rob GOD of his *Honour* by *Self-Complacency*, or Attributing any thing proudly to my self, by *Vain-glorious Thoughts* or *boasting Words*. Nor will I unnecessarily talk of my own Parts or performances, but when I judge it may tend to the Good of *others*; but, with a Sincere and Unaffected Humility, I will acknowledge and bear in mind my own Nothingness. Much less will I *assume* to my self *falsely* what I have *not done*, nor aggravate what I *have done*; but will utterly reject all such Motions or Suggestions of Vanity, as *Unjust* to my Divine Benefactor, *Undue* to my self, and *Foolish* in themselves.

I

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I do intend, thro' the help of the same Divine Grace, not to *despise* or *contemn* those who are Inferiour to me in any regard; nor carry it *enviously* towards those that *excell* me; but I will bear my self *respectjully* to those *above* me, *Civilly* and *kindly* to my *Equals*; and *obligingly* to all my *Inferiours*.

I do intend, thro' GOD's Grace, that I will not persist in my own Saying or Opinion, unless it be of some *Great Concern*, and *Evidently True*; nor be *Unwilling* to yield to *Truth* spoken by *others*, because my self has contradicted it, or because it suits not with my *Humour* or *Interest*.

I do intend, thro' GOD's Grace, to govern my self in all my Actions with *Moderation* and *Discretion*; and (if possible) to do nothing with *precipitancy*, or in a *Hurry*. Above all, if my weakness should transport me into some *Passion*, I do fully intend and purpole, not to make any *Determination* or *Resolution* while that *Passion* lasts; but to *suspend* my Thoughts, Words, and Actions till my Reason *recovers* its former *Calmness*; and my Christian Principles
(my

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(my best Guide and Light) regain their former *Lustre* in my Soul. Resting assured that, otherwise, I shall run my self, and all I do, into many *Great Disorders*, which will bring Repentance e'er they be *redrest*; according to that of St. James, (*Chap. 1. v. 20.*) *Ira viri Iustitiam Dei non operatur*; The Anger of Man does not perform the Justice of G O D.

I do intend, thro' God's Grace, that, in case any Injurious, and *High*, and Sudden Provocation shall, for want of Christian Vigilance, by surprize transport me into a great Passion of Just Anger; I will, to my utmost power, restrain my self from breaking into reviling Words, affrontive Language, or ill Wishes to the Person that wrongs me; but that I will call to mind how our Dear Saviour, our *Pattern*, did on the Cross, in the midst of his most tormenting *Agonies of Pain*, pray for his Unjust and Cruel *Persecutors*. I will endeavour also to remember his new Command of *Loving my Neighbour*; and will not exasperate him, but, pitying his Passion or Injustice, will mildly and

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and modestly represent to him my Innocence, and his Unreasonableness, and strive to *gain my Brother* : and, if that avail not, I will not recriminate ; but, after having done what is requisite to preserve my own Credit, I will leave *Revenge to God*.

I do intend, by God's Grace, that, when any Harm or Cross befalls me, I will set my self to consider with how many *Innumerable Benefits*, both as to my Body and my Soul, God's Goodness has *Blessed me* ; and how he has befriended me in particular above great Multitudes of *others*, both as to my Health, Wealth, Birth, Parts, Reputation, and many other Worldly Contents and Conveniencies. Which reflected on, I will, with Confusion and Shame, ask his Pardon for my *Repining* and want of Resignation when, now and then, some harm, *viz.* Sickness, Loss, Injuries, Discredit, &c. light to me ; otherwise it will seem as if I made account that a *Constant Over-flowing* of his Gifts were *due* to me for my great *Virtue* and *Merit* ; & that no *Crosses* or Punishments were justly *due* to me for my *Sins*, nor

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any *Checks* were needful to make me amend them.

I do intend, thro' God's Heavenly Grace, not to do the several Obligations incumbent on me *Negligently*; but will employ all the *Diligence* I am able to do my Duty to God, in keeping his Holy Commandments, and performing my Obligatory Prayers; To the Blessed *Saints* in Heaven, by keeping their Festivals, and reading their Lives, in order to imitate their Virtues: resting assur'd that this is the very *best* way to obtain their Patronage and Protection: To the *Church*, and my *Ecclesiastical Superiours*, by observing their Pious and wholesome *Precepts*, as far as I shall understand they oblige me: To the *Civil Magistrates*, in my Indispensable Allegiance, and due *Subjection* to them, and my *Quiet* and *Respectful Demeanour* under them: To all my *Fellow Subjects*, and *Fellow-Christians*, by Honouring, respecting, loving, pitying, and (to my power) assisting every one of them according to their several Degrees or Necessities. Lastly, I will daily pray that they may all

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all of them, perform the same Duties to one another. Blessed Lord! What a Paradise would this wicked, perverse, froward World be, if it would please your Divine Majesty to give them your Grace, (or rather if they were dispos'd to receive it) and move them effectually to observe those Duties exactly and sincerely towards one another!

I do intend, thro' God's Grace, that if any Unchast Suggestion should assault me, I will immediately divert my Thoughts from it, and say with Holy King David, *Turn away mine Eyes, Lord, that I behold not Vanity*; and I will, next, set my self, to consider the Infinite Purity and Holiness of God; how Ugly, Nasty, and Deform that Vice, and how Amiable the Virtue of Angelical Chastity are in the sight of GOD, and of his Glorious Court in Heaven. Also, that to prevent such Impure Temptations of my Ghostly Enemies, I will set a Guard over my Eyes, not to regard nor dwell upon such alluring Objects; upon my Ears, not to listen, or give a

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dience to any *Impure Discourses*; and
over my *Tongue* to avoid all *unseemly*
Talk, tho' in way of Jest or Drollery;
and that, if any *Charming Object* comes
before my *Eyes*, I will make *That* the
occasion of beseeching *God* of his *Mercy*
that that *Superficial Endowment* of
Beauty may not prove a *Snare* to the
Soul of the Person that has it, nor
allure others to *Sin*.

I do intend, thro' *God's Grace*, that,
if he shall please to send me *Worldly*
Riches, I will not set my heart upon
them; but will consider that they were
lent me by his *Providence* to do *Good*
to others; For which reason, I will not
lavish them *profusely*, but will husband
them to the best advantage; and with
a prudent care see that my *Charities* be
not misplac'd on *unworthy Objects*; but,
in the first Place, that they be employ'd
to promote *Common Spiritual Goods*, or
such as may be most beneficial to the
Souls of my *Great Neighbour*, the
World; and, in the next, to such par-
ticular Persons who are in *great want*,
or *Sufferers* for a *Good Cause*.

I do intend, thro' *GO D's Grace*,
to

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to pay my *Debts* to my utmost power, and not to *defer* them 'till I die, or leave that precise duty upon Uncertainties. Much less will I detain, or refuse to restore, whatever I may have of others in my hands, tho' never so small; remembering how severe and strict the *Justice* of GOD is against the *least* voluntary *Injury* done to my *Neighbour*, even tho' my *greatest* Enemy.

I do intend, thro' GOD's Grace, to observe the direct Rules of *Truth*, *Simplicity*, and *Sincerity* in my Words and Actions while I am treating with my *Neighbour*; and will avoid and abhor all Circumventing *Tricks*, or *Double-dealings*; which are so Odious & Abominable to GOD, who is essentially *Truth* and *Justice*.

I do intend, thro' God's Heavenly Grace, not to give way to *Sloth*, so as to neglect my *Devotions*, whatever *Dryness* or *Uneasiness* in Prayer I may experience; nor will I be careless to do my other *Obligatory* Duties, tho' I find it difficult and tedious to perform them: Nor will I *distract* my *Devoti-*

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ons, or *disquiet* my own *Peace* by meddling with other Peoples affairs farther than Charity and Justice *oblige* me.

I do intend, thro' the Assistance of Heavenly Grace, that I will never so grossly *distrust* and *blaspheme* the Infinite Goodness of my *Heavenly Father*; nor the Merits and *Intercession* of his only Son, my dear Saviour; nor so vilify the Efficacy of the *Sacraments* he has instituted, and of those innumerable other Means he has left in his Church for our Increase in Virtue and Remission of our Sins; as, out of my whimsical Scruples, to entertain the least thought of *Servil Fear* or *Dread* that he will *damn* my Soul for every *Venial Fault* or Imperfection; but, on the contrary, that I will put a firm and Unshaken *Hope* and full *Assurance* in his Mercy, while I am Conscious to my self that I *intend well*, and do actually *make use of* those most effectual *Means*; and do not pursue any *Unlawful End*, or set my Affection on it as my *Chief Good*; nor bend my Best Endeavours to compass it; but find that I am very *sorry* to have offended him formerly, and
fearfully

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fearfully careful not to offend him deliberately hereafter, even in smaller matters if I be aware of them.

Advertisement, *I had once intended to have subjoin'd a Form of Confession for those purer Souls who aspire to higher Degrees of Perfection: But, upon second Thoughts; I wou'd it as Unnecessary; hoping they may easily gather out of this Paper of Intentions, and out of that which has been delivered, Discourse 3. Sect. 2. how to examin their Conscience exactly in order to that Sacrament.*

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Particular Instructions

How to raise and increase Solid Devotion in Good Christians, in many signal Occasions.

Preparation to Prayer.

IN the first place, I cannot think that such a *Preparation* to Prayer, as is it self made by way of a *Prayer*, is at all Proper; for what Preparation is there for that Preparatory *Prayer*? If none, then 'tis *ill-made*. and therefore it can be but a *Bad Preparation* to those Prayers that follow: If a y, then it must be some *Mental* Considerations which can *dispose* and *prepare* us to make that Preparatory Prayer as we ought. And if that *Mental* Consideration be premis'd, then there can be no Exception against our addressing

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a Prayer or Petition to God, to assist us with his Grace to make the *future* Prayers, or say those *Offices*, with *Reverence* and *Attention*.

To perform then this Duty as we ought, *Two* things are to be observ'd. First, to frame in our Mind, by Christian Principles, assisted by our Reason, a *True* Idea or Notion of God's *Infinite* Majesty, to whom we are going to speak. Next, to make a *True* and *Lively* Apprehension that he is *really Present*. I use the words [*True*] in both places; because none are *True* Adorers of him, but those who *worship him in Truth*. It were obvious to invent many ways easy to *Fancy* how to do both these; but then, as they would fall short of *Truth*, so they would always render our Devotions *less Solid*, and, in some sort *Fantastick*: whereas *Truth*, tho' it does not always enter into our Understanding with the *same Facility*; yet, once enter'd, it *sinks deeper*, fixes it self *unremovably* in the Judgment, and (being it self a *Spiritual Quality*) it begets in us *True Spirituality*; it frees our Devotions from being *Superficial*,

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ficial, and renders them like it self, that is, *Solid*. And, it being the Nature of *Truth* to be *Prolifick*, and *Fruitful* of Consequences, it will in time fill our Understanding with many useful Knowledges, and enable us to walk by Establish'd Rules.

The *Former* of these is done by a Thoughtful and Serious Reflexion, that the *Being* of our Great G O D is of so Sovereign a Nature that he *enters* in his Indivisible Essence *all* the Perfections we are able to conceive; and, so, that each of them, as it is *in Him*, is exalted to an *Infinite Excellence*. Wherefore, he is *Ininitely Great*; and, therefore, he claims our *lowest* Prostration and Adoration. He is *Ininitely Holy*; and, therefore, ought not to be approach'd, or apply'd to by a Soul that retains any Affection for Sin. He is *Ininitely Just*; whence he *hates* the Prayers of an *Obstinate* and Wicked Sinner; they being no other but a Mockery of his Infinite Majesty to his face, and a farther Provoking of his Judgments. He is *Ininitely Wise* and *All-knowing*; and, therefore our Intention in Praying

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to him, must be *sincere*, since he sees the most secret Recesses and Corners of our Hearts. He is All-Powerful to perform to us whatever he has *Promis'd*, and we can *Ask* of him. He is *Infinite-ly* Merciful, to pity all our Frailties, and pardon all our Sins, tho' never so many, and so Enormous; if we be heartily Willing and *Desirous* to be freed from those *Hellish Chains*, and be truly *Penitent* for what's *past*. He is *Infinite-ly* Rich in his Goodness and Bounty; and, therefore, ever generously ready to bestow upon us all those Gifts and Graces we beg of him, if our hearts be *Dispos'd* to receive them. How effectually these Considerations, laid to heart, will season our Souls with *Faith*, *Hope* and *Charity*, which do give the Worth and Vigour to all our Prayers, every Devout Reader will at first discern.

To make a lively Conceit of the Divine Presence when we go to pray, many ways use to be propos'd; That which I shall pitch upon as the *very Best*, being more exactly and Literally *True*, the least obnoxious to *Fancy*, and most
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Beneficial to our Daily and Hourly Devotions, is this. We are to make account, and certainly apprehend that God is really *Present* to us in the very place where we pray; not as *Contain'd* in place, but by *Containing* the Universal Nature of Place it self, thro' his giving *Being* to all those Bodies which *make Place*. We are to understand (as was shown Dis. 1. Sect. 5) that *Spiritual* Beings having nothing to do with *Quantity*, they cannot properly be said to be *present* in any place; but only *improperly*, as they *operate* upon something that is in such a Place; now the *Proper Operation* of our Great God and Creator of all things, is to *give* all his Creatures their *Being*; whence follows, that he is *more* intimately *Present* to Them, than They are to Themselves; since they could not *be* themselves, or be *Present* to themselves, did not he, thus *Present with them*, and *in them*, give them to *Be*. He is then ever *Present* to the *Essence* or Nature of our Soul by his Omnipotency, (that is by *Himself*) while he is continually *giving* her such a Being as she is capable to *receive*: So,

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for the same reason, he is *Present* to her by his *Goodness*, while he imparts to her all those *Natural*, and also *Supernatural* Gifts and Graces she wants if *Obstinacy* in Sin puts no *Obstacle* or *Indisposition* in her to admit those Holy Effects.

To make a fuller conceit of the *Presence* of *G O D*, consider farther that, since he is *Infinitely Wise*, all Creatures (even to the most inconsiderable Atome of the World) are present to his *Knowledge*; and His *Knowledge* is *Himself*. He is *Present* to *Inanimate* Things, by his Giving them their several *Essences*, and such a Degree of *Being* as is proper to their Natures. He is *Present* to, (or *in*) *Living* things, by his Giving them *Life*, or Power to *move themselves*. He is *Present* to *Sensitive* Creatures, or *in them*, by his Giving them their several Powers of *Sense*. He is present to *Knowing* and *Rational* Substances, by his Giving them the Powers of *Knowing*, *Willing*, *Intending*, &c. Nay, he is *present*, even to our *Meat* and *Drink*, by his giving them actually their several *Tastes*, and their Powers of *Nourishing* us; and so of the rest. And, were
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not this so, they could have *no Being*; nor, consequently, *any* of these *Powers*. In a word, he is *always*, and (his Indivisible Deity having *no Parts*) *entirely* in *All Places at once*; otherwise none of them could be *at all*.

It will be thought that this Doctrine is too *Abstruse* and *Metaphysical* for those who are not profess Scholars. And I confess the later of these is true: for *Metaphysicks* being that Science that treats of *Being* in an *abstracted* consideration, or of those *Notions* or *Natures* which are *above Matter*; and the *Nature* of the *Godhead* being *infinitely above* that *Basest* and *Lowest* Conception; we must either make use of *Metaphysical* *Notions* when we speak of *Him*, or we can never speak of *Him* as we ought. Whence if we use any *Physical* or *Natural* *Notions*, or such *Words* as express them, when we discourse of his *Divine* *Essence*; we debase and dishonour him by making *Him*, in our *Thoughts*, no better than the *Ignoblest* of his *Creatures*, *Bodies*. G O D himself has taught us by his own express words, how we are to conceive and

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Speak of him, in his Answer to *Moses*, when he ask'd him by what Name he should call him when he related his Message to the *Israelites*; which were, *Ego sum qui sum*, or *Qui est*, *I am who am*; or, *I am he who is*: which signify fully, tho' briefly, that his very Nature is *Being*, and that all other things have no *Being* at all but by Him. Which words are most properly *Metaphysical* Language; and the *Sense* of them, which is that *GOD's* Nature is *Self-Existence*, or *Self-Being*, is the very Top of *Metaphysics*.

As for their Apprehending it to be *Abstruse*, 'tis an Objection taken from the *Fancy* of those who are so wedded to that easy, but *most Unwise* Faculty, that they are loth to raise themselves above it, and make use of their *Reason*: For, what *Easier* than to know what it is to *Be*, which is the *hardest* Word, and the *Chiefest* in all *Metaphysics*; and yet so *Facile*, that 'tis impossible any Man living should be Ignorant of it. But, perhaps, it will better satisfy them to see that the Holy Scripture, (intended for all sensible Persons who

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liv'd at those times), delivers the same Doctrine, and uses the same expressions when it speaks of *GOD's Presence*, and of the manner of it. The Holy Prophet *Jeremy*, (*Chap. 14. ver. 9.*) when at his Prayers, has these words, *Tu autem in nobis es Domine. Thou, O Lord, art in us.* *St. Paul*, (*Acts 17. ver. 27, 28.*) when he was to teach the Athenians the Nature of the True *GOD*, told them, *Non longe est ab uno quoque nostrum: He is not far from every one of us*, that is, He is Present to us all. And he gives the very Reason alledged here, *In ipso enim vivimus, & movemur, & sumus: For in him we live, and move, and have our Being.* And King *David*, when he would express *GOD's Omnipresence*, delivers his Thoughts thus, (*Psal. 139. ver. 7.*) *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, and whither shall I fly from thy Face? If I ascend into Heaven, thou art there; (beatifying the Holy Saints and Angels;) If I descend into Hell, thou art Present there; (Punishing thy Wicked Enemies) If I take my Wings early, and fly to the farthest Extent of*

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the Sea; neither altho' my hand will lead me, and my right hand will lay hold of me, &c. Let not then these Devout People strain their Thoughts to reach some very *high Imaginary Glorious Place* in the *Heavens*, and thence frame a Con-
 ceit that *G O D* is only *present*, or (as it were) *dwells* there; such a Fancy, if held to, makes him *far Distant*, and *Absent*; which diminishes that Re-
 verence, and squanders that Attention which the other *true Apprehension* gives us; but let them truly judge, and firmly hold that, as sure as we our selves *live*, or *are*, so Certain is it that our Great *G O D* is *with us*, and *in us* at all times, but especially when we *pray*; tho' he be in a more excellent manner in his *Happy Saints* by his Best Gift of *Glory*: which makes us look upwards when we pray, as desiring he may be *in us*, and we *with him* after the same sort. Nor let Men fancy *imaginary* ways of his Presence to *delude* them-
 selves (as it were) into an apprehension that he is *near us*; but let them assure themselves, that, as *precise Truth* is most Pleasing to *G O D*, so any *one Truth*,
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that *grounds* our Devotion, will bring greater Blessings to our Souls than thousands of those Pious Illusions. It will make our Affections it produces, Solid, Wise and Firm; it will enable us to Worship GOD in *Spirit* and *Truth*; whereas the *Fanciful* Methods of *imagining* GOD *near us*, have nothing in them of *Either*. Were this Evident Truth of GOD's Omnipresence, lively *imprinted* in our Understanding, *Fixed* in our Judgment, and, by frequent Reflexion, kept *alive* in our Wakeful Memory, how *circumspectly* should we behave our selves in every Action we do thorow the whole course of our Lives! how Attentively, Reverently and Devoutly should we still demean our selves at our Prayers, if we *prepare* our Thoughts with this most Pure, and most Evident Consideration! Adore then the Unconceivable Majesty of our Infinitely Great GOD *thus Present*, with the same humble Prostration as if you *saw* Him; *Trust* in him, and Love him for his equally Infinite Goodness, with the same Assuredness and Affection as if you *beheld* him dealing his largess of the
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present Blessings you enjoy, (that is indeed *all* you have) both as to your Body and to your Soul; and standing ready to give you more and far greater, according as you open your Heart to receive them; and, thus prepar'd, begin your *Prayers*.

Advertisement. *It is not intended or required that any should run over all these Preparatory Discourses, every time they go to pray. Let them only be seriously weigh'd and considered by way of Meditation; which done twice or thrice, fix in your Mind the Affections they shall produce. They will not fail to work in your Soul such a Disposition as will make you pray with more Reverence, and keep your Attention more Steady. The Truth of the main Points, they being so perfectly Rational, will more easily stick in your Memory; and Practice, assisted by a Review of them now and then, will bring in the rest. What's said here, is to be understood also of the following Instructions.*

This

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This way, I say, of framing a Conceit of God's *Greatness* and his *Presence*, seems to me the *very Best*, as having *most Truth* and *least Fancy* in it. If the *Reason* of some short Discourfers does not reach it (as *intelligible* Christians do,) let *Faith* assist them; for *Faith* teaches us this Truth as well as *Reason*: But, if neither of them sinks so easily into their Apprehension, as *Metaphorical* Representations do, which, not being *Literally True*, have more of *Fancy* in them; then let them make use of such Resemblances as the Scripture, in accommodation to our Weakness, has given them. Let them read then what is said in the Apocalypse, *Ch. 1.* from *verse 13*, to the *17th.* or *Ch. 4.* from *verse 2*, to the *6th.* and *ver. 8.* to the end; as also the whole *5th* Chapter; These, and other such like places, may, in likelihood, strike their Fancy, and, thence, their Soul with Reverence and Adoration; and, by their Majesty, and admirable Strangenes, may conduce to startle their surpriz'd Imagination into a Devout Attention, while they are in a particular manner Present

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sent to GOD, and *He* to *Them*,
(that is, while they are Spiritually,
in one another) in time of Prayer.

How to say the Lord's Prayer with Devotion.

FIRST, consider what a Boldness it
may justly seem, and, as it were,
an Affront to the *Infinite Majesty* of the
King of Heaven and Earth, to preface
our Addresses to him with such a pre-
sumptuous Appellation, as to call him
Father. Such an Arrogant word spoke
to a *Sublimary* King, would deserve
from him a severe Punishment for such
a sawcy rudeness. How incomparably
Sweet then and *Condescending* is the
Goodness of our Great GOD, to be
not only not *Angry*, but *Willing*, not
only *Willing*, but *Well-pleas'd*, we should
speak to him in such a Style, so infi-
nitely *above* our Dignity, and *below* *His* !
And how much are we bound to our
Dear Saviour, whose Merits, made thro'
his Mercy) *ours*, has made us, by his
Sancti-

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Sanctifying Grace which he has given us, worthy to approach him; and has also *encourag'd*, nay *Commanded* us to call him *Our Father*.

This, I say, the Infinit Goodness of our Great GOD has done on his part; To correspond with it on *ours*, let us stop at those two first words, and not pronounce them 'till we have *seasoned* our Soul with such Affections as so poor a *Child* ought to bear to so *Great* and *Good* a Father. Let us then *Believe* in him, and hold firmly all he has taught us by our Heavenly Master, his Son, with the same Undoubting humble Simplicity as a Child does his Honoured and Dear Father. Let us *Trust* and *Hope* in his Goodness with the same humble and innocent *Confidence*, as a Child does in his loving Father, that he will bestow on us those Gifts which are truly Convenient and *Good for us*; humbly leaving the *Time* and the *Manner* to the Wisdom of his Fatherly Providence. Let us *Love* him with the same Affection as a Grateful and Obsequious *Child* does a most Kind and Obliging Father; and to shew our Love

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is *Sincere*, let us at the same time, *resolve* to be *Obedient* to his Commands; and, thro' his *Grace* (on which, conscious of our Childish Weakness, we ought ever to *rely*) never to do any thing that is *against* His *Holy Will*.

Add also, in your Thoughts, to each of the *Three First* Petitions [*On Earth as it is in Heaven*:] for no words can possibly so fully express the perfect Accomplishment of that for which we do there pray.

Let the *First* Petition be mentally address'd to GOD the *Father*; the *Second*, to GOD the *Son*; and the *Third*, to GOD the *Holy Ghost*; and let the same order be observ'd in the *Three* Later ones: For, besides that the sense of each of them seems appropriated to those *Three* Persons respectively; this Best Prayer, made and intended with this Distinction and Order, is, withal, a *Profession* of that *Chief* Mystery of our *Christian Faith*.

Lastly, while we use the words [Our] and [Us] let us direct our Thoughts to pray heartily and charitably for *all Mankind* in general, whether

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ther Atheists, Heathens, Jews, Turks, Hereticks or Catholicks, Friends, or Enemies, Saints or Sinners; since we are bound to love them all, either (as *St. Austin* expresses it) *in GOD*, or *for GOD*. Let us then pray affectionately for *Good People*, that they may *continue* and *increase* in *Virtue*; for *Sinners*, that they may repent, and return to their *Duty*; and for all those that *Err*, that *GOD* would please to give them *Knowledge* of his *Divinely-Reveal'd Truths*, and *Obedience* to his *Holy Evangelical Law*. This will dilate our *Hearts* by the *Practice of Universal Charity* to all; and free our *Souls* from that narrow *Selfishness* which so sticks to our *Nature*: and, as it regards *Good Christians here*, will also exercise that *Principle* of our *Faith*, [*The Communion of Saints*,] taught us in our *Creed*, but, I fear, too little regarded. To enure our *Souls* to this *Universal Charity*, I take to be reason, why *Christ*, our *Head*, enjoyned us to make use of that *Plural Expression*. There is yet another thing to be observ'd, if we would make our *Prayers* after the *most Perfect* man-

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manner, *viz.* that all our Petitions, both for our selves and others, do (as the *Order of Charity* requires) begin first from *GOD*; so that when we pray that those that stray from Faith, may be brought out of their Errours, Sinners reduc'd to Sanctity, or that Good Souls may be *improv'd* in Virtue; our Primary Intention, and Wish ought to be, to the end that *God* may be better *Glorify'd* and *Serv'd* by all his Creatures. These proper and pertinent Advertisements premis'd, in order to *prepare* our hearts to say this Holy Prayer, we proceed to the Prayer it self.

[*Our Father*] By *Creation*, which gave us our *Being*; By *Adoption*, thro' your Son, our Saviour, who *redeem'd* us from the *Slavery* of Sin; and, by his Holy Doctrine and Example, *instructed* us perfectly in the Way to Salvation: And, by *Regeneration*, thro' the Blessed Spirit of Divine Love, sent by *Both* into our hearts, to *Sanctify* them, and make us effectually follow those Ways of Life, which That Holy Doctrine had shown us: but especially to obey that First and most Necessary

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Precept of *Loving* thee, our True Happiness, above all things; which Love gives us the Filial Confidence, when we invoke thee, to cry *Abba Father*.

[*Who art in Heaven.*] Who art thy own Heaven, being *Self-Happy* in thy own *Infinitely Perfect* Deity; and in the best manner Present to thy Saints in the *Heavenly Jerusalem*, by Revealing to them thy most Glorious and Beatifying Face; in seeing which, consists their most *Consummate Bliss*, and their *Full Felicity*.

[*Hallowed be thy Name.*] Ever Glorify'd, Blessed and Sanctify'd be thy Holy Name with that *Essential* Glory, Bliss and Holiness which the Unity of thy Godhead in an Undivided Trinity of Three Persons, did enjoy *in it self*, and *by it self* before the World. And, Hallowed, Blessed, and Glorify'd, *now*, and *for ever*, be the same Adorable Name by all thy Creatures, for all the Being, Gifts and Graces thou hast, out of the over-flowing Goodness of thy own Essence, bestow'd upon *them*: But, particularly, by thy Saints in Heaven, and Good Souls upon Earth, whom

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whom thy Grace has made fit Subjects to bless thee, both for thy Undeserv'd Mercies, and for the Admirable Works of thy Hands throughout the *whole Creation*; all which do magnifie thee, and loudly resound thy Praises by the Mouths of all thy Sons and Servants, who consider and contemplate their Wonderful Order, Beauty and Texture, and their Wisest Administration and Conduct. Make us, Heavenly Father, incessantly to celebrate and magnifie thy Name, for that Infinite All thou art in thy self; and for the *Double*, or rather *Minifold*, Favours of *Nature* and *Grace*, which thou hast been pleas'd to confer upon us thy poor indigent Creatures, who have *Nothing* of either but only from thy meer *Bounty* and *Disfusive Goodness*.

[*Thy Kingdom come.*] Blessed Jesu! who (*Apoc 5 v. 9.*) hast redeem'd us by thy Blood out of every Tribe, Language, People and Nation, and made us a Kingdom for thee our G O D! make us by thy Grace, humbly sub'ct and obedient to thee our King, and inviolably to observe thy *Immaculate Law* in this World,

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World, that thou mayst reign in us, and we with thee, in the next. Let thy *Grace* make us as Conformable to all thy *Commands*, as are thy *Glorious and Pure Spirits in Heaven*, that so we may, by our Instructions and good Example, have some share in that Great Work of accomplishing the number of thy Elect. *Convert*, dear Lord, all the World to thy *Holy Faith*, and subdue their *Rebellious Wills* to pay their most due *Honour* and Allegiance to thee their Mild and Merciful King. *Hasten thy Coming*, Blessed Saviour; and make Us of the number of those who do heartily wish and desire it; that, free from all the *Entangling Affections* to this World, we may long to meet & see thee our Glorious Redeemer coming again in Glory at the last Day; and, with Devout Aspirations, sigh and pant after that Blisful Sight; and, this not customarily, or for fashion sake; but, fixing our Final Hope and Affection upon that only desirable Season, and with the most ardent Transports of our Wills, crying out, *Come Lord Jesu, come quickly.*

Thy

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[*Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.*] Blessed Spirit of Divine Love, whole Will is the *Authour* and *Exemplar* of all *Holiness*, bend our Will to as perfect a *Conformity* with thine, as is found amongst thy Happy Saints in Heaven. Forbid it, Lord, that we should in the least desire that *our* Crooked, Blind, and Perverse *Will*, which, by Original Sin is byassed towards *Foolish* and *Narrow* Ends, should be preferr'd before *thine*, which aims at the *Best* and *most Universal* Good of the whole Creation; but sanctify us so by thy Grace, that with a Pliable, Unreserv'd & Glad Resignation, such as those *Sons of Love*, thy Celestial Inhabitants, exercise, we may heartily wish *thy* Divine Pleasure may be accomplish'd in *all things*. By which means we shall *begin* our Reign with thee, even in *this World*; since we may be sure that *thy* Holy Will, which thro' Resignation is become *ours*, can never suffer any Controul or Check; but will, in every occurrence possible, be perform'd and accomplish'd.

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[Give us this Day our daily Bread.]
Heavenly *Father* ! upon whose Provi-
dential Care thy poor beggarly Crea-
tures do daily depend, both as to the
Nourishing their Souls and their Bodies;
so that neither the Former could for
one moment remain free from being
Corrupted by Sin, without thy Conti-
nual Gracious Assistance; nor would
the Later be preserv'd from *starving*,
unless fed and supply'd by thy ever o-
pen and Liberal Hand. Give us, we
beseech thee, *this day*, thy Heavenly
Grace, and all those *Virtues* and *Means*
of Salvation, which thou seest we do
most want; and, withal, if it be thy
Blessed Will, all such *Temporal* Conve-
niencies as may best enable us to live
virtuously; so as both to sustain our
selves, and (according to our Capaci-
ties) relieve others; looking up, in the
mean time, to thee, as the *only* Bestow-
er of *both*. We ask this, O Lord, with
full Confidence in the Name of thy Dear
Son, our Saviour; who has promis'd
and assured us that thy Fatherly Kind-
ness will give to us thy Children, all
those Good Gifts which thy *Divine*
Wif-

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Wisdom sees to be most *Wanting to us,*
and *Necessar, for us.*

[*Forgive us our Trespases as we forgive them that trespass against us.*] Merciful Jeſu! who, to recommend more ſtrictly thy moſt Charitable *N^w Command of Loving one another,* haſt made our Pardoning others, the *Condition* of obtaining Pardon for our *own Sins*; Give us Grace to lay to heart how *igly* it concerns us to perform exactly this *Necessary Duty*; which unleſs we *do from our hearts,* we aſk, and draw a Curſe upon our ſelves every time we ſay this Holy Prayer. *Forgive* then, O Lord, we humbly beſeech thee, all thoſe who have any way *injur'd us* by Thought, Word, or Deed. Make them ſee their Unreaſonableneſs, and become more Charitable towards us: and, whether that be or no, make us no leſs Charitable towards them, but ſtill to pity their Paſſionate Weakneſs and Injuſtice. Which, however it be contrary to *ſleſh and blood,* and the Corruption of our Nature, and accounted *Folly* by the blind Politicians of this World; it ought to be held
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neither *Hard*, nor *Unwise*, by thy true Servants and Followers, who are oblig'd to imitate thy Holy *Example*; especially when they consider how thy self, who art the *Wisdom* of the *Eternal Father*, and wast ever most *Innocent* and most *Obliging* towards all, amidst thy most tormenting Agonies on the Cross, didst meekly forgive, pray for, and (as far as could stand with truth,) excuse thy most Cruel and Unjust Persecutours and Crucifiers.

[And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.] Holy Spirit of Divine Love! who, possessing our hearts by thy Sanctifying Grace, dost comfort, strengthen, and fortify them against our Passionate and Inordinate Affection to Creatures, in which consists all *Sin*: Be thou our impregnable Fortress against the Assaults of all our Ghostly Enemies; that we never be so wretchedly *Foolish* and *Wicked* as to set our *First Affection* on any Created Trifles, or prefer them in our Practical Judgment and Esteem before Thee our Infinitely Perfect God, who art our Sovereign Good and only True Felicity.

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licity. Give us, Bleſſed Lord, the Liberal Beſtower of all Beſt Gifts and Graces, Supernatural *Prudence* to prevent Temptations by keeping our Senſes mortify'd; *Vigilance*, to be aware of, and reſiſt their *fiſt* Motions; *Courage*, to bear the brunt of their moſt violent Impulſes; and, *Victorious Perſeverance* to ſubdue and overcome them. 'Tis thy Powerful Grace, O Lord, which fights *in us*, and *with us*; who, otherwiſe, ſhould be utterly unable to bear the ſhock, both of our *Outward Enemy*, the Devil; and of our *Inteſtine Rebel*, our Corrupt Nature, which is ever ready to *mutiny* againſt our Reaſon, and againſt thy Holy Law. Do thou, our Invincible Lord, ſubdue by thy Grace thine *own* Enemies, fight thy *own* Battles, and Crown thy *own* Conqueſts, made more Glorious and Triumphant by *our Weakneſs*.

The Angelical Salutation.

SO many Devout Pieces have been writ upon this particular, that 'tis not

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not very easy to add any thing to them. I shall only here recommend it to the Reader's consideration, that from this *Heavenly Message* to that incomparable *Mirroure of all Purity*, the *Immaculate and ever-Blessed Virgin*; and from her humble *Consent* to the *Arch-angels Proposal*, ensu'd the *Incarnation of the Eternal Word*; from which all the *Holy Doctrine*, and *Admirable Examples* of our Saviour, which enlighten'd and instructed us both in *Faith* and *Virtuous Life*; our *Redemption* by his *Death* and *Passion*; the *Raising* our lumpish Affections to a vigorous *Hope* of *Eternal Life*, and *Love* of *Heaven*, whither he went before to prepare us a *Place*, and to intercede for us; The *sending* the *Holy Ghost* by his *Father* and *Himself*, to form, settle and establish his Church in *Truth*, and in *Sanctity*: That is, in one word, there ensu'd thence *all the Good* to poor lost Mankind that can possibly be imagin'd. Had it not been for *this*, we had all still ador'd a *Chimerical* multitude of ridiculous *False Gods*; some of them *Senseless Inanimate Creatures*, and the *Works of Men's Hands*;

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and often times the *Devils* themselves. Had it not been for *this*, we had liv'd here a while *Slaves* to our *Lusts*, and Adorers of *Vain Glory*, *Worldly Honours*, and *Brutish Pleasures*; which, when our poor deluded Soul is by Death divested of her Body, do all vanish into Air, and leave her Empty of any thing but that which she *must* carry with her, *viz.* her Violent and ill-set Impure Affections; which will torture her with the Loss of those Darling Temporary Goods, on which only she doted while here; and, which is a thousand times worse, *indispose* her, and make her *utterly incapable* of beholding God's Glorious Face, which, now too late, she sees is her only True and Soul-satisfying Happiness. So that, having lost *all* she *could* wish or hope for, and this irrecoverably, she plunges her self into a Hell of *Eternal Misery*. This, I say, had been the dismal Condition of all Mankind, had not the Son of the *most High*, out of his meer Goodness and Mercy, condescended to be *Incarnate*, and liv'd amongst us. This lays on all Christians a most absolute Obligation,

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as oft as they repeat this *Salutation*, which brought from Heaven the first *Good Tidings* of our Approaching Redemption, to revere this Holy Mystery; and to bless and magnify the Wisdom and Goodness of G O D for bringing it to effect by most wonderful means, and thus *Revealing* it to the World.

*When you are going to say the
Credo,*

STIR up your Faith to believe every particular contain'd in it, as firmly as you do any thing you saw with your Eyes. Let not your Reason be startled at those *strange* and *Prodigious* Truths it delivers: but consider that they either referr to God's *Essence*; or to some *Supernatural* Operations or Effects of *His*; which, springing from some of the Divine Attributes, viz. his Omnipotence, his Justice, his Goodness, &c. ought to be adjusted to *them*, that is, they are and ought to be infinitely *Admirable*, and beyond our Com-

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prehension. When you are to repeat it, (especially if your Devotion be voluntary) do not huddle it over *in haste*, but take time to allow such *Great* and *Sacred Truths*, an Attentive Consideration. They are so Pregnant, and full of *Deep Sense* that they deserve and require your most *serious* Reflexion. Make account they are the *Principles* by which you are to square and order your *whole* Christian Life. They are the *Root* and *Ground* of all your *Best* Devotions; and comprehend in them the *most* Efficacious *Motives* to Hope and Charity; so that 'tis impossible but they must, if duly weigh'd, excite in your Souls all those Holy Affections of *Adoration*, *Love*, *Thanks*, *Admiration* of the Divine Goodness, &c. If any Beam of those Supernatural *Irradiations*, if any Spark of that *Heavenly Fire* begins to catch hold of your Will, do not *quench* and *stifle* it by your proceeding on *hastily* to the following Points; but let it enkindle *farther*, and *foment* it. Resting assur'd that such Good Affections (they being the *End* and *Fruit* of Prayer) are more worth than multitudes of Prayers huddled over
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customarily. In a word, all those Articles of our Christian Faith, being such Sacred Truths *in themselves*, and, without, instill'd into us, and infallibly Ascertain'd to us by *Divine Revelation*, Seald with thousands of evident Miracles; cannot fail of producing in us their Proper Effects, conformable *Holy Affections*; if we be not wanting to our selves in *Applying* them, and making them *sink* into our Souls by a due Consideration; without which, *no* Motive, tho' never so forcible in it self, can have *any* force upon our Wills.

Thy' thy Son Jesus Christ, our
Lord and only Saviour, Amen.

These most Significant words, which do usually conclude all our Prayers, do include in them *all* the *Title* and *Reason* we can possibly have to be heard, or obtain what we ask; and therefore, of all others, they ought to be seriously reflected on, and laid to heart. What a **Firm Hope** will it raise in us, that our Petitions will be granted, when we put them up in *his Name*, and by *his* special *Commission* who is GOD, Coequal with

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Him to whom we present them, and infinitely Belov'd by Him; and who (*Rom. 8. v. 34.*) does use the power he has with his Heavenly Father, and *Interpellat pro nobis, intercedes for us.* This is so fundamental a Truth, and as such so esteem'd and follow'd by the Doctrine and Practice of the Catholick Church, that, tho' to implore the Assistance of Saints in Heaven, in order to their Petitioning with us and for us, be held *Lawful*, and *Profitable*; yet, as there is not in the whole Missal, (which is her most solemn Liturgy) *any one Prayer to any Saint*, so neither is there *any one Prayer* address'd to God to grant our Request for the Sake and Merits of that Saint whose Day we celebrate, but *that very Prayer* ends in those words [*Thro' our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.*] which plainly signifies that her true Doctrine is, that neither the Intercession of all the *Greatest Saints* in Heaven, nor of the *Good Souls* upon Earth, no not of the *whole Church* her self, are able of themselves to assist us in the *least*, but only *thro' our Lord*, and their, and *our only Saviour Jesus Christ*, whose

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Servants they are. Whence he is graciously pleas'd, out of regard of their faithful Service, to accept of their Mediation for such as apply to them for their Prayers, and truly Honour them for their Virtues; which Honour being given them meerly for *his sake*, or (which is the same) for their Holy Life by which *they honour'd Him*, he looks upon it as given to *Himself*, as is evident out of the Holy Scripture. When therefore you come to those words in the Close of your Prayer, exert your Faith in his gracious Promise, that *whatever we ask the Father in his Name, he will give it us*; and erect your Hope in his Goodness, and in the strictest Union in the same Essence which he has with his dear Son, that he will deny nothing that is requested of him for the sake of such a *most Powerful*, and *most Beloved* an Intercessour,

Amen.

This word is a kind of general and hearty Ejaculation, repeating and summing up *in short* all that is contain'd in the foregoing Prayer; and fixing more deeply and firmly in our Souls

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the *Affectionate Wishes* pour'd out more diffusely in our *Antecedent Petitions*.

Glorry be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost ; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

While you repeat these Words, raise your most Devout Affections of *Adoration*, and joyn with the Quire of the Church *Triumphant* in Heaven in singing this Holy Hymn of Praise to our common Lord ; diverse forms of which you may find in the *Apocalypse*. In doing this, you put in practice the Article of our Creed [*The Communion of Saints*.] Besides, you will render your Duty of Laud and Thanksgiving more Acceptable by the company of such a *Multitude* of Holy and Blessed Spirits going along with you. And tho' our *harsh* and *low* Voice does but *lisp* and imperfectly *ecchoe*, in comparison of their more comprehensive and more elevated Expressions ; yet, the *Ground-work* of both our Songs, and the *Tunes* are the *same* ; Our Voices, tho'

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tho' Bad, yet *fol* not the Harmony of the Hymn, but make it more Melodious; or rather this Consort of both the Militant and Triumphant Church, is made up only of perfect *Unisons*, without any *Discords*:

*As two like-tuned Viol strings,
By Sympathy's Mysterious touch,
One answers when the other rings,
The Churches's sweet Accord is such.*

*They both are tun'd upon one String,
Tho' the Triumphant be rais'd higher;
And We in Weaker Notes do sing
The Anthems of the Heavenly Quire.*

Hence the Church Militant having, in her most Solemn and Sacred Office, made mention, in the Preface, of the Adoration which Angels, Arch-Angels, and all the Host of Heav'n do give to GOD, thro' Christ our Saviour, adds immediately *With whom we humbly beg* that even our (low) Voices may be admitted, with a humble Confession saying, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord GOD of Saboth, &c.* Let not then these most significant

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nificant and sublime Words, mention'd above, which we repeat after every one of *David's* Psalms, be past over *hastily and carelessly*; nor let us look upon them as on a *Private* Petition, as it is when we ask for any particular Necessity of our own; 'tis the Common, Unanimous, and most Fervent Aspiration both of the *Militant* and *Triumphant* Church. Lastly, 'tis that Anthem, the singing of which must be our Unwearied & Blissful *Employment* for all Eternity; and he will resound and chant it *loudest* (or be most Happy) in Heaven, who *enures* his Soul to practice it most heartily and affectionately here on Earth.

What is said of the above-mentioned Aspiration of *Divine Praise*, is to be understood of that Devout Ejaculation [*Alleluiah*;] so solemnly us'd, and so often repeated by the Church in all her *Joyful Festivals*, and times of *Spiritual Gladness*; since it contains in short, the same *Magnifying of our Lord*, and our *Exulting in G-O-D our Saviour*, as did the other.

The same Method of joyning our Notes of Praise with the Choristers of the

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the New Jerusalem, ought to be observed also when you, in your Devotions or Offices, repeat those *Psalms*, or *Songs* of K. David, in which he celebrates the Magnificence, Greatness, Mercy, and Goodness of our God; in which itraîn the sublime Genius of his kind of Spirit, exerts it self frequently and affectionately. That Divine Poet was so *Heavenly Wise* as to make his choice of a Subject so *Infinitely Excellent* and *Copious*, as put it out of his power to aggravate *beyond the Truth*, (the Common Folly of Sublunary Wits) or to say *too much* to show how high his Fancy could reach; and, withal, a Subject so *Sublime*, that the very *Apprehension* or *Idea* of it is sufficient to raise a Soul to the highest pitch of *Rapture* and *Extasy*. Oh, that our modern Poets would employ their Talent on such truly worthy Subjects! It would at once *edify* their Christian Readers; and withal, preserve the Credit of their Fancy from being held *ridiculous*; which, while they lath out and exaggerate in their *Encomiums* of some wretched *Clayie Idol*, it most miserably *falls down*
stars,

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stairs, for want of a *solid Ground* to support such *frothy* and *insipid* Commendations.

Of Recourse to our Good Intentions in time of Trouble.

IN all *sinister* Chances and Occurrences which give you *Vexation*, be sure to have Recourse to your *Good Intentions*, which are seated in the Superiour Part of the Soul, where you will most certainly *find Comfort*: For Example, if *Dryness* in Prayer seize and seem to benumb your Soul, so as you can have no manner of Devotion, but that *Idle* Representations (perhaps worse) make a show of being the only Objects of your Understanding, and that it seems impossible to have so much as *One Good Thought*: In such a comfortless Circumstance reflect that you had a deliberate Intention, when you came to *Prayer*, to elevate your Soul to Heaven; and that, having *never retracted* that Intention, it *still remains*: Consider that this

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Intention is a *Spiritual* Act of your Soul ; and that you are still *worshipping* God in *Spirit*, which is the only *True Way* of Serving and Adoring him : 'Tis your *Heart*, 'tis your *Will* only which God *requires or regards*; and not *fine and easy Fancies* complying and *going along* with your Superiour Part. Be assured that, since it troubles you that you have them, they are *against your Will*, and so they are *none of yours* ; but sent by the Devil to disturb your Mind, and weaken your *Hope*, by perswading you that you do not do your *Duty*, nor *pray at all* : But be not disturb'd, nor lose one Tittle of your *Hope* or inward *Comfort*, nor give Credit to his false *Suggestions* who is the *Father of Lies*. Do but reflect, and you will easily discern that, tho' your *Fancies* run rambling from one foolish Object to another, yet your *Intention* and *Will* to pray is still *one* and the *same* ; and (thro' GOD's Grace) above his *Power* to *alter*, and above his reach to come at it. There is nothing but *Turmoil* in your Inferiour Part ; but there is a *settled*, and *quiet*, and *unmov'd Rest* and *Peace* in the Superiour, which
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the Devil has no Power to *disturb*: This mads him, and therefore he invents these wily shifts to make good Souls, who are not aware of them, or do not at present consider what *true Spirituality* is, be out of Heart and despond, by frightening them with Bugbears of his own creating; and thence making their weak Ignorance believe that they are *offending* GOD when they are really & actually *erving* Him; and this perhaps in a *better* manner than if they had all the *Sweetness* in Prayer they could wish or imagin: In which, (unless conducted by a skillful Guide) the Soul is in ten times *greater Danger* than she can possibly be in this *Dryness* and *Distractedness*. Contemn then, and laugh at the Devil's Folly, by retreating, thro' your Reflexion, into your own *Intentions*, which lye in the *Center* of your Soul; there you will find the Holy Ghost confirming your Heart in Holy and Good Resolutions to do his blessed Will; and this so strongly, by Virtue of those Christian Principles which our Divine Master has intilled into our Mind

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Mind, and rivetted them there, that our Ghostly Enemy stands at *Bay* in our *Fancy*, being not able directly to *approach* them, and *hopeless* to *subdue* them.

What is said here of *Dryness* or Disturbance in your Prayers, apply to any *other* Trouble, Cross, Persecution, or Affliction, all which are vexatious to our *Inferiour* part; but when, upon Reflexion, we come to consider 'tis *God's* Will, which we with our *Superiour* part pray daily and heartily *may be done*; especially when we undergo any of those Troubles or Crosses for *Virtue*, or for *Conscience-sake*; we shall, in despite of all our *Spiritual* Adversaries, find *Comfort* and *Satisfaction* in *Apice Mentis*, or in the *Superiour* part of our Soul, and in our *Good Intentions* and *Principles* which are *fix'd* there; and such an *Inward Peace* as the *World* cannot give.

Of Voluntary, or Occasional Prayer.

MY last Instruction shall be, that, besides the Forms of *Customary* and

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and *Set Prayers* in Books, they would more over use almost daily (at least now and then) some short Prayer dictated by none but only by their *own heart*, and accommodated particularly to their *own Circumstances* and *Exigencies*; in which they affectionately pour out their Soul to God, imploring his Gracious Assistance for their Spiritual Necessities; as either for any Virtue they most want; for *Support* against Temptations; for Deliverance from any dangerous Circumstances they live in; or for *Comfort* when they find their Soul *Desolate*, or *Opprest* by any *Care* or *Fear*, which hinders the *Peace* of their Interiour, or such like. Such a Prayer as this, is (as it were) an *Immediate* and *more Familiar* Conversation between God and themselves: It breeds a kind of *Intimacy* with our dear Saviour. It is free from that *Superficial* Lukewarmness to which *Customary* Prayers are oft times obnoxious; and is *fitted exactly* to what our most Inward Thoughts and Wishes would be at, were they *at liberty*, and not *fetter'd* with *Set Forms* of speaking what's prescrib'd by *Others*. While
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it springs really out a deep sense of our Spiritual Necessity, every word of it comes from the heart, and is spoken in earnest; which seldom happens in such Prayers as others have dictated or appointed; which also makes us perfectly Attentive and void of Distractions while we thus pray. It needs no Study or Meditation, to frame or compose it, nor sought words to express it; for it is (as was said) penn'd only by the Heart, and flows naturally from it: and therefore is more properly levell'd towards him who sees the heart, and most relishes its unaffected and silent Language; especially if accented now and then with a Devout Aspiration, or an Affectionate humble Sigh, which never fails of reaching Heaven. It will give a great Spiritual Joy to the Soul, to be now and then all alone in private with her Beloved and Dear Lord; now praising and thanking him for all his Innumerable Favours; now blessing him for all his Mercies; now begging of him, for his Son, our Saviour's sake, to bestow on us those Virtues of which we most stand in need; especially his Best Gift, his Sanctifying Grace,

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Grace, or Divine Love; and to protect us against the Dangers we dread. The Devout Affections and Spiritual Benefit we shall gain by such Occasional Prayers, are Incredible and Inestimable. Let then such Good Souls make use of the Common Devotions of the Church, or such as are writ by Holy Men, for their Ordinary Prayers; but yet so, as to reserve to themselves that Liberty of Spirit, not to neglect, now and then, these Extraordinary ones. The Season when, and how often they are to use them, their own Exigency, and the due care of their Souls will best inform them; and, sometimes, God's Holy Inspirations (which usually spring from the practising them) will move and excite them to that Exercise. Which Holy Motions and Impulses, tending to make their Devotions Affective; let them take heed of neglecting, much more of rejecting them, lest they render themselves Unworthy of such Favours for the future.

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